THE ROLE OF REMEMBRANCE OF THE FIRST WORLD WAR IN THE CONSTRUCTION OF THE DISCOURSE OF NATIONAL IDENTITY IN NORTHERN IRELAND

JOHN POULTER

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The University of Leeds

School of Sociology and Social Policy

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Acknowledgements

Abstract

This work explores the way in which the texts and practices of Remembrance of the First World War in Northern Ireland can be seen as not only constructing discourses about the past but also discourses of identity, including national identity, in the present. It will examine how Remembrance is used to shape such identities and how an understanding of this can be, and is being, used to tackle the transformation of conflict in the region.

In the process it will ask questions about the production of meaning and the role of power in such production. This will lead to an exploration of the range of actors engaged with Remembrance and how they use it to achieve their aims.

It will explain the way in which such 'memory work' has been used in the construction of discourses of the nation on the island of Ireland and how this contributed to discourses of division amongst its population.

It will conclude by attempting to summarise the functions of Remembrance and its role in the construction and shaping of the nation and national identity.

The research focuses on the 'Republican' Falls Road, 'Loyalist' Shankill Road, the Cenotaph in Belfast, and the Island of Ireland Peace Park in Belgium. One of the main methods of research has been the production and analysis of photographs and many of these are used throughout this presentation to enable the reader to both better understand and also join in with the sense-making that such a project inevitably entails.

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List of Abbreviations used or in images

Abbrev.	Full name [Further details] (Linked with)
ANZAC	Australian and New Zealand Army Corps
INLA	Irish National Liberation Army (IRSP)
IRA	Irish Republican Army
IRSP	Irish Republican Socialist Party (INLA)
LOL	Loyal Orange Lodge
MLA	Member of the Legislative Assembly [of Northern Ireland]
OCA	Old Comrades Association
ONH	Oglaigh na hEireann ['Dissident' IRA]
PIRA	Provisional Irish Republican Army (SF)
PSNI	Police Service of Northern Ireland
PUP	Progressive Unionist Party (UVF)
RDFA	Royal Dublin Fusiliers Association
RHC	Red Hand Commando (UVF)
RIR	Royal Irish Rifles [British Army]
UDA	Ulster Defence Association (UFF)
UFF	Ulster Freedom Fighters (UDA)
UPRG	Ulster Policy Research Group (UDA)
UVF	Ulster Volunteer Force
WBACS	West Belfast Athletic and Cultural Society (UVF)
YCV	Young Citizen Volunteers [UVF Youth]

Chapter 1   **Introduction**

Introduction

In this review I hope to sketch out the key concepts, theories and debates relevant to an exploration of the topic. Initially I will address the ways in which the conflict in Northern Ireland has been theorised and argue for the centrality of the political motivational concept of 'the nation'. This will lead on to a survey of the differing approaches to the theorising of this concept and a particular focus on the importance of the 'imagining' of the nation. Such an image needs to be constructed and various writers have attempted to explore how this occurs. To do so they have adopted, in particular, some of the methods and perspectives of cultural analysis and I will explain what these are and how they are useful. This will require an introduction to concepts including, signification, myth, différance, discourse and power/knowledge and call on the work of Saussure, Barthes, Derrida and Foucault. This survey will show how theorists across a range of disciplines have come to see meaning as non-essential, contingent and fluid. It will also demonstrate the need to understand how, despite such characteristics, meaning comes to be experienced as essential, eternal and fixed.

Addressing this encourages the examination of the role of history and memory in the discursive construction of the nation on the island of Ireland. Many writers have identified the ubiquity of 'Irish History' as a major factor in the construction and maintenance of the conflict in the North. How such stories of the past populate the streets of the region leads us to consider the conceptualisation of 'memory' by such writers as Halbwachs, Assman, Hirsch, Nora and Connerton. The latter pair emphasise the importance of symbolic display and ritual in the maintenance of such 'collective memory' and this encourages an exploration of such signifying practice in the context of Northern Ireland. Finally, a narrowing of focus to the specific phenomena under study, leads us to examine the ways in which 'Remembrance' has been theorised

Conflict in Northern Ireland

In the near century of its existence Northern Ireland has experienced several periods of violent conflict. The most prolonged, from the mid-1960s to the time of writing, and in particular from 1969 to 1997, came to define the province in the eyes of the world. 'The Troubles' resulted in more than 3700 deaths (see McKittrick et al, 2007) countless injuries and the blighting of the lives of survivors, bereaved, and all those who lived within this landscape of violence (see e.g. Taylor, 1997, 1999, 2001; Toolis, 1995; Coogan, 1995; Rolston, 2011; Parker, 1993; McKay, 2000; Lundy, 2006). The paramilitary ceasefires of 1997 are usually taken to mark the end of the armed conflict but, on at least two levels, violent conflict still continues. Republican paramilitary splinter groups, the Real IRA, the Continuity IRA, and Oglaigh na hEireann, have continued to attack military and police targets, resulting in several deaths. And sectarian violence between, in particular, gangs of youths has led to the building of many new 'Peace Walls' – high concrete walls – to keep apart occupants of neighbouring districts in the cities of the region. At times of heightened tension, such as around the 'marching season' in the summer, these are often the scene of 'confrontation' as missiles such as bricks, bottles and even petrol bombs are hurled across the divide. This occurred, for example, across the wall separating the Lower Newtownards Road Loyalist area in East Belfast and the Catholic enclave of the Short Strand in July 2011.

Various reasons for the conflict have been propounded. Eamonn McCann's (1974) Marxist analysis frames the situation as typically colonial and the conflict as anti-imperialist on the part of republicans. He particularly stresses the social inequalities experienced by and motivating the Catholic population. Michael Farrell (1976) also relentlessly catalogues the range of ways in which the Catholic population were denied equitable access to rights and opportunities and, indeed, any sort of political power during the fifty years of self-government in Northern Ireland. The title of his book – *The Orange State* – refers to the Loyal Orange Order, whose members in the province dominate civil society and very publicly parade Protestant supremacy. The well-worn statement by the then Prime Minister of Northern Ireland, Sir James Craig, boasting of a 'Protestant Parliament and a Protestant state' (usually misquoted as 'a Protestant Parliament for a Protestant people') (Bardon, 2005: 538) lays bare the situation. Far less well known is the fact that his comments were made in response to statements in the newly created Irish Free State, that the Dail would be 'a Catholic parliament for a Catholic people' (McIntosh, 1999: 23). Indeed a reactive and defensive stance towards the larger polity on the island can be seen to partly

explain the distrust and suppression of the Catholic population in the North. A.T.Q. Stewart (1997) describes and attempts to explain the additional historical reasons for the existence of such a 'siege mentality' within the Protestant community in the province.

McGarry and O'Leary's (1995) ambitiously titled *Explaining Northern Ireland* explores a wide range of factors that could be argued to have contributed to the existence and continuation of the conflict. The authors take apart the competing claims of arguments highlighting theological, cultural and economic factors within Northern Ireland and also address the extent to which the external context and particularly the position and role of Britain can be seen as more influential.

What no commentator disputes is that, as it has been framed within Republican and, reactively and to a lesser extent, Unionist political discourse, the conflict is supported and made sense of by appeals to conceptualisations of 'the nation'. For the Republicans the nation is unequivocally 'Ireland' and they are 'Irish'. For the Unionists the nation is 'The United Kingdom' and they are most commonly either 'British' or, more recently, 'Ulster' or 'Ulster-Scots' (for an explanatory exploration of this change see, for example, McAuley and McCormack, 1990). Already, in this latter uncertainty we can observe the problems with regard to the use of national labels of identity. Indeed the very concept of 'the nation' is difficult to define. As Ian Adams observes:

> Nationalism is the simplest and most powerful of ideologies, but intellectually the weakest. This is because the central concept upon which the ideology is based is quite remarkably vague and difficult to pin down. (1993: 99)

Theorising 'The Nation'

'The nation' as a category of social collective exists within a paradigm shared with 'ethnic group' and 'nation-state'. The connection with the former emphasises the supposed shared biology and culture of the group whereas that with the latter looks to the sovereignty claims based upon such a discrete unity. Both facets have their problems with accounting for, downplaying, and assimilating differences within the 'nation' whilst identifying, emphasising and fetishising those with other 'nations'.

Various ontological positions have been identified within the ranks of scholars addressing the nature and history of nations. That labelled 'primordialist', which holds that some

nations have always existed, sometimes irrespective of any achievement of 'nation-statehood' can be seen to be useful to groupings engaged in attempting to claim, build or maintain for themselves the status of a nation-state. In the case of works on Northern Ireland those of Ian Adamson (1974, 1982) could be argued to take this approach. His works put forward the case for the existence since prehistoric times of the Cruthin, a people living on both sides of the 'North-East Channel' which separates Ireland from Scotland. After the invasion of the Gaels these Cruthin eventually migrated to the lowlands of Scotland. The Plantation of Ulster a thousand years later was not therefore an act of colonisation but rather, using his controversial descriptor, 'The Great Homecoming'. Adamson's standing as an amateur historian, his establishment of the Ulster Society and his position as a Unionist politician have all been used to challenge this story of an ethnic group whose claim to residence predates the Gaels and whose ancient, and of course current, territory challenges established 'Irish' borders.

Such stories of national antiquity can be seen as the 'myth' of 'the' nation. It is the common-sense view of this, seemingly eternal, entity within which and in relation to which we live our lives. It is with an awareness of this that Ozkirimli alerts us to the one of the recurring problems faced by scholars of the nation – reification. It is, of course, a problem for theorists more widely. The concept of the nation has been so successfully established as part of the common matrix through which we perceive our world that it can prove very difficult to avoid slipping into a realist stance towards it in the course of our analyses. (2005: 171-173) This can be observed by returning to Adams who cannot completely let go of an essentialist approach to at least some, unspecified, nations when he argues that: '[I]n much of Europe, and most of the rest of the world, national identity has had to be created.' (op cit: 100). In doing so he implies that some nations, especially in Europe, are naturally occurring entities. This is a widespread phenomenon within historical works and those addressing 'Ireland' and 'the Irish' are typical in this regard. Even in studies that acknowledge the work that has gone into promoting the idea of the nation this category is simultaneously implicitly presented as naturally occurring and subsequently given causal power (see, for instance, Githens-Mazer, 2006)

Amongst the vast majority of scholars of nation and nationalism who see the nation as somehow 'constructed' the 'modernists' point to various aspects of modernity as being the catalyst for the development and establishment of nations and the nation-state system. Ernest Gellner identified the growth of a widespread vernacular literacy encouraged by

industrialisation, with its attendant needs of a large-scale infrastructure and a literate and numerate workforce, as the prime causal factor in the movement towards the nation-state as the primary political entity (1994 [1964]: 55-59). Karl Deutsch offered 'a functional definition of nationality' that stressed 'complementarity' of social communications and acquired social and economic preferences and which identified industrialisation as having emphasised the importance of such connections as:

> the rise of industrialism and the modern market economy […][which] offer economic and psychological rewards for successful group alignments […]. For almost any limited group within a competitive market, both security and success can be promoted by effective organization, alignment of preferences, and coordination of behaviour. Vast numbers have felt a need for such a group and have answered it by putting their trust in the nation. (1994 [1966]: 27-28)

Benedict Anderson also identified industrialisation and the consequent growth in literacy and improved 'national' infrastructure as being key but for him it was the emergence of a national press, dependent on such literacy and distributed within that infrastructure, that enabled a collection of geographically, economically and, in many ways, culturally disparate people to perceive of themselves as a nation. 'Print-capitalism', which saw the economic advantage in writing in the vernacular rather than in elite scripts such as Latin drove the spread of a common national language across divides of dialect.

An acceptance of much of Anderson's argument with regard to this, politically, hugely important function of the media has recently been apparent in debates around the role of the BBC in the 'Broadcasting of Britishness' (the title of a conference at Oxford University in 2008) and in some of the arguments put forward in the ongoing discussions on the need to protect public service broadcasting in the multi-channel digital communications era.

Whilst not all might agree with the prominent role Anderson proposes for the print media in the process of nation construction, or indeed with the possibility of forging such a solid unity as he allows for the nation, Anderson's concept of the 'Imagined Community' has proved extremely useful to many writers on the subject because of the focus it demands upon the population perceiving themselves as belonging to 'the nation'.

Explaining what he means by the phrase and how he perceives it to influence the population Anderson states:

It is *imagined* because the members of even the smallest nation will never know most of their fellow-members, meet them, or even hear of them, yet in the minds of each lives the images of their communion. […] The nation is imagined as *limited* because even the largest of them, encompassing perhaps a billion living beings, has finite, if elastic boundaries, beyond which lie other nations. […] It is imagined as *sovereign* because the concept was born in an age in which Enlightenment and Revolution were destroying the legitimacy of the divinely ordered, hierarchical dynastic realm. […] Finally, it is imagined as a *community* because, regardless of the actual inequality and exploitation that may prevail in each, the nation is always conceived as a deep, horizontal comradeship. Ultimately, it is this fraternity that makes it possible, over the past two centuries, for so many millions of people, not so much to kill, as willingly to die for such limited imaginings. (1983: 15-16)

Anderson goes on from this to argue that in order to start to understand how the amount of sacrifice and killing as have been witnessed in the last two centuries could have been generated as a result of these 'shrunken imaginings' one needs to focus on the cultural roots of nationalism. (ibid: 16)

Accepting such an argument has directed scholars of nationalism to explore the ways in which the concepts of the nation and national identity are constructed, maintained and shaped. Hobsbawm and Ranger had already described what they called *The Invention of Tradition* (1983) in the service of the strengthening of the concept of the nation and others were encouraged to likewise examine the symbolism and ritual that spoke the nation to itself and to the world.

Subsequent works have examined practices and texts ranging from the explicitly both meaningful and 'national' such as the use of flags and anthems to the apparently insignificant such as road signs and coinage. Indeed the title of Michael Billig's (1995) *Banal Nationalism* coined a phrase that directed attention specifically towards such everyday, mundane symbolic material within and reproducing the nation and largely rendered invisible by their ubiquity.

Such a focus on the everyday was encouraged by work being done, particularly in Britain, in the emerging field of Cultural Studies. The most influential figure initially in the field was Raymond Williams (1958, 1961) who critiqued the myopia that focused all cultural critique and significance on what he described as 'elite culture' insisting that 'Culture is Ordinary'

(1989 [1958]) Culture is ubiquitous, all are engaged in its production, circulation and critique and its complexity and consequences are not only a legitimate but essential area for academic study. The institution of the Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies (CCCS) at Birmingham, most notably directed by Stuart Hall, and the development of the 'Popular Culture' unit by the Open University helped to establish this approach. The title of Paul Willis's *Common Culture* (1990) can be seen to echo in Billig's choice of *Banal Nationalism*. Willis's work is typical of a strong current within Cultural Studies that emphasises the cultural significance of popular cultural forms that whilst often commodified are also the resources with which young people are able to explore and proclaim their identity and creativity through 'symbolic work'. This was also the focus of work by a range of writers looking at the apparent construction of collective identities in the form of youth subcultures (e.g. Cohen, 1972; Willis, 1978; Hebdige, 1979; McRobbie, 1991; Thornton, 1995)

In the case of the nation not all such symbolic work takes place with a focus on 'us'. Such 'internal' construction of the nation needs to be complimented by a differentiating presentation of the Other. Tzanelli emphasises the importance of external Others in nation construction.

> [N]ations do not develop in a void or as a consequence of a 'fabrication' of identity that comes 'from within' their symbolic or physical territory. On the contrary, they emerge through dialogue and intercultural recognition. (2006:483)

Such an awareness is certainly relevant to the Irish experience of nation building, with the British, and in particular the English, as the Other. It also alerts us to the importance of how any local (national) Irish politics plays in the Irish diaspora, particularly in the USA. Tzanelli's addressal, in the same work, of 'internal' Otherness is also applicable to Ireland, with the Ulster Unionists as the most obvious example but the term also being applicable to the 'South' where the 'Anglo-Irish', sometimes known even more dismissively as 'West Britons', came into existence as a category after the separation from the United Kingdom. The existence of such a category enabled the demonstration of apparently varying degrees of commitment to the nationalist project. This perspective informs her subsequent identification of the important constitutive role played by the two 'voices' of the nation, which she calls 'diforia'. One 'voice' speaks to and is received by 'significant Others' external to the nation, the other is addressed to and understood by an internal audience. Diforia is 'the medium of historical discourse, making the nation's biography available to

the world'. (2008: 498) The case studies she presents demonstrate the role of both centres of power within the nation and powerful interlocutors outside it in the construction of the contemporary Greek nation.

The 'ethno-symbolist' perspective within the study of nations and nationalism, stemming from the work of Anthony D. Smith and enjoying a great deal of influence amongst current scholars in the field, accepts that much symbolic work is done to promote and maintain the nation but that this can only be successful if using symbolic resources that have a deep and direct authentic link to within the 'ethnie' that forms the nation. Such an approach depends upon a reification of the 'ethnie' as its foundation. It also tends towards an essentialist understanding of symbols. Both of these positions have been challenged by the ideas of scholars such as Bhabha (1990), Ozkirimli (2005), and Calhoun (1993, 1997) who, because of their adoption of an anti-essentialist perspective emphasising difference and the fluidity of meaning could be labelled 'postmodernists'. Their attempts to theorise the nation have been informed by some of the language, resources and methods associated, again, most closely in Britain with the inter-disciplinary, or post-disciplinary, field of cultural studies.

Signifying the Nation

What is known as 'the linguistic turn' in cultural studies was the coming to prominence, within the field, of theories that were developed in response to the ideas of Ferdinand de Saussure (1960) regarding language. Saussure was a linguist who argued that it was useful, for analytical purposes, to conceive of language as being made up of the structures and rules of a language, which he termed *langue*, and all the utterances in that language, *parole*. Unlike most of his peers, Saussure was more interested in how language worked, his *langue*, than in the etymology of *parole*. He observed that an examination of primary binary oppositions, such as alive/dead, friend/foe, man/woman, leads one quickly to the realisation that they are dependent on each other to create meaning. Without their 'other' they possess no meaning. Thus they have no meaning residing within them; no 'essence' that we would eventually be left with if we subjected them to distillation. The same can be seen to be true when looking at a range of terms within the same paradigm – all adjectives, for instance. The meaning of each is informed by our awareness of the existence and meaning of all the others. When we ask 'How are you?' we place the reply, for instance, 'fine' relative to 'great', 'okay', 'awful', etc. and thus make sense of it. Meaning in language

is, therefore, dependent upon relations between different elements within the structure of the language rather than residing as essences within individual elements. Meaning is 'relational' and not 'essential'. (For an accessible introduction to Saussure's semiology see Culler, 1976).

This insight was seen as valuable by scholars beyond the discipline of linguistics. Anthropologist Claude Levi-Strauss (1958) used it to study the ways in which the rituals surrounding the preparation and consumption of food could be seen in terms of a structure of significance from which could be read off meaning related to kinship. Roland Barthes (1972) used it to explore the meaning of texts ranging across the arena of popular culture: an advert for pasta; the 2CV car; the Eiffel Tower; a publicity shot of Greta Garbo's face. The concept of 'language', and hence the applicability of Saussure's theories, was now expanded to include all systems of signification. 'Structuralism', as this perspective and method became known, could be used to explore the production of meaning across the entire cultural spectrum.

The basic unit of such systems was the 'sign' which Saussure split into two: the aspect that could be sensed – seen, heard, smelt, etc. – which he termed the 'signifier' and the concept it brought to mind – the 'signified'. Note that this is the *concept* of the 'thing' and not somehow the 'thing' itself. Language is not equivalent to material reality. In Saussure's system it structures that reality. It identifies, orders, separates and connects material phenomena.

Placing these now discrete concepts into the structure of language imbued them with a certain meaning relative to the other elements within it. For Saussure and Barthes, in his early work, the sign and signified together created a simple, straightforward, neutral meaning through the process of 'denotation' (Barthes later rejected this possibility of a 'neutral' meaning).The 'Union Jack' is the 'national' flag of the United Kingdom. However, all signs can also produce meaning at the 'second level of signification' as the sign, acting now as a signifier, combines with another signified concept to produce 'connotations'. The 'Union Jack' connotes the continuing unity of the United Kingdom, the British Empire, the Mini car, Austin Powers, the British National Party, Glasgow Rangers fans, etc.

Barthes argued that when only one connotation was visible and all others had been rendered invisible we were in the presence of 'myth'. Myth, in this usage, is 'common

sense'. It is *the* meaning. As Barthes states 'Myth is depoliticized speech'. (1972 [1957]: 143)

> Myth does not deny things, on the contrary, its function is to talk about them; simply, it purifies them, it makes them innocent, it gives them a natural and eternal justification, it gives them a clarity which is not that of an explanation but that of a statement of fact. If I *state the fact* of French imperiality without explaining it, I am very near to finding that it is natural and *goes without saying:* I am reassured. (ibid)

Cultural Studies scholars saw a project in the 'de-mythologising' and hence re-politicising of signification. Hence, the work done in analysing the texts and practices of culture, both 'high' and 'low', 'elite' and 'popular', 'spectacular' and 'banal' in order to identify the ways in which such constructions within the sphere of signification could come about. What work had been done to achieve this? By whom? And with what consequences?

Analysing the workings of power in the shaping of our view of the world was hardly new but had, within Cultural Studies, previously been dominated by a Marxist perspective that demanded an examination of the political economy of a society in order to unlock the workings within. Indeed what Barthes was analysing was essentially the same 'ideology' that was the target of his peers. His methods and his theorisation of the concept, however, differed and he deliberately avoided using the same term in order both to stress this difference and also to escape from the party political baggage (or 'myth'…) the term was lumbered with.

The 'linguistic turn' did not, as some critics imply, render obsolete the addressal of economic hierarchies but rather added to this the examination of other differentials that created hierarchies based not only on class – arguably the most obvious social materialisation of economic disparities – but also on race, gender, sexuality, etc. In the process it also provided a new analytical methodology.

The Fluidity of Meaning

Saussure's perspective had severed the link between language and 'reality' or the material world. Jacques Derrida pursued this aspect of the significance of Saussure's ideas and in the process argued that Saussure failed to follow through on his own arguments. Derrida argued that the logic of relational meaning within language systems left such systems with

no prime concept whose meaning was essential and which occupied a central, fixed and determining position within the structure of the language. *All* terms were relational. They were also all loose, in the sense that the entire system had no fixing to an external reality. All terms could only produce meaning through their connection to other terms. These connections were unending, circular and inconclusive. They could also change. Hence he argued that final meaning was always differential rather than specific and that it was also always deferred as more terms, more differences, more connections came into view and continued to cause us to adjust our understanding of the term under analysis. He famously used a dictionary search as an illustration of his argument. As we look for definition of meaning of one term we are sent on an unending journey of discovery with regard to each subsequent term. We need to look up other words to understand the first word and so on ad infinitum. Returning to the 'Union Jack' we can perceive the same sort of circular journey which is never finished not only because of the plethora of relational concepts we would need to take into consideration but also because of the production, during the course of our journey, of new ones e.g. Austin Powers.

Derrida thus refuses the notion of fixed, eternal and completely certain meanings. All meanings are fluid, contingent and in process. Thus 'the nation' has no fixed meaning, cannot be conclusively defined, cannot be 'dealt with'. There can be no final closure. Ireland, lacking any 'essential' meaning, defines itself in opposition to its 'primary Other' – England. For Unionists this role in the relational construction of their 'Britishness', for example, could be said to be played by the Republic of Ireland. For Loyalists it could be Irish Republicans. Yet these 'Other' categories are themselves rootless. Shifts in one cause ripples that extend beyond the liquid boundaries between categories.

How should we, can we, therefore, 'deal' with 'the nation' in order to analyse it? How should we, can we, heed Ozkirimli's warning and avoid reifying the nation? After Derrida (1976 [1967]) we could, perhaps, always place the term 'under erasure' by writing it, crossing it out, but still leaving it legible. In doing so we would be demonstrating that the term was inadequate, inaccurate, in error, and yet at the same time necessary and useful. My reading of 'Irish' and 'Ireland' will inevitably be different from yours. What I am referring to with the term will also inevitably change as my historical focus shifts and as the 'pen' slips from my fingers and 'history' continues its work on the world. But we need the term for me to tell this story and for you to remake it in the reading of it. Every use of labels of nationality in this work should be treated as being under erasure. Indeed every

category distinction of any kind should be viewed likewise. You, the reader, will judge if such a blanket avowal appears to be carried through in the reasoning across a range of individual cases.

Whilst meaning may be eternally in process we *do*, in the course of our everyday lives, put closure upon the terms by which we navigate our world. We may not, if asked, be able to conclusively define any particular term but within our speech community there is enough of a shared understanding of the term for it to be useful to us in communicating ideas and co-ordinating action. And, thinking back to Barthes description of myth, there is also a normative and indeed obvious meaning for many terms. The possible range of meanings has been restricted, reduced. Following this trail leads us to power.

Discourse

For Michel Foucault what enables the temporary fixing of meaning is power at work in discursive construction. 'Discourses' for Foucault are the system of relations that determine our perspective with regard to a particular aspect of our world. (1972)

'Nation' is one such discourse. Within the discourse only certain ideas, statements, practices, make sense. Once again we can see the overlap between this concept and those of myth and ideology. Unlike Marx and his philosophical followers who saw ideology as being a distortion of the truth and that it was possible to perceive undistorted truth once one had been delivered from 'false consciousness', Foucault finds it untenable to counterpose discourse to truth. For 'poststructuralists' such as Foucault and Derrida there can be no appeal to a universal and eternal 'truth'.

Foucault argues against the position that believes it possible for neutral, objective knowledge to be 'discovered' or created. The objectivity, neutrality and validity of such pure knowledge are claimed to be achieved through a scrupulous autonomy from centres of power. For Foucault such a description is not recognisable in practice. For him knowledge is only validated *as* knowledge if it has the backing of power. In any society certain institutions, for instance 'the church', 'science', 'the academy' – and related individuals – priests, scientists, professors – are invested with the power to 'pronounce' upon a certain topic. They literally 'speak' it into existence, into shape. They produce, maintain and police the discourse that such statements cumulatively construct. In the case of 'Ireland' and 'Irish, 'Britain' and 'British', therefore, there is no objective truth that can

enable us to permanently and universally fix their meaning and thus their borders. These concepts, and particularly 'Irish' and 'British' are subject to a constant process of re-description by a range of social actors including those involved in practices of Remembrance.

For Foucault there can be no separation between power and knowledge and to prevent us forgetting this he proposes the term power/knowledge (1980). Foucault sees power as being not solely concentrated in the 'centres of power' controlled by an elite but rather dispersed throughout society. He advocates tracing it back from the body, which he sees as the prime site upon which power works and can be made visible. The poppy on the lapel; the erect posture of the silent figure publicly enduring the rain. Such a trail takes us through and alerts us to the existence of 'capillaries' of power (ibid: 96) which are co-extensive with society. The circulatory analogy also illustrates Foucault's argument that power does not simply flow down a hierarchical structure but rather circulates and can flow at least both ways.

Where Marx gave priority to relations of production and hence, because of the concentrated ownership of the means of production, the dominance of a ruling class, Foucault encourages the examination of the ways in which power manifests 'itself' in all kinds of social connections. This does not preclude identifying centres of power or the consequences of their existence, but it does ask us to also look at the multiplicity of ways in which power can be experienced. The UK and Irish state institutions clearly play an influential role in the promotion and policing of the performance and meaning of Remembrance, but so too do city councils, political groups at street level, community development groups, and individual families and citizens.

Foucault also stresses the positive or productive aspect of power. Power does not just operate to restrict, to suppress, and to deny, but also to expand, to resist and to create. The perceived imminent betrayal of the Unionist population by the UK government in the mid-eighties produced a reaction that reinvigorated the myth of the Somme in the publicly displayed and curated 'memory' of that population. Another, and much more widespread, example of such reactive production in Ireland is the wealth of 'Irish' culture whose continuing existence owes much to deliberate attempts to resist growing British cultural domination. The prominent display of such markers of identity on the streets of Belfast is also enabled by the power of local groups over their 'own' space.

Using the concept of discourse encourages an addressal of both the power of the forces that police it and those that create, resist and shape it. With reference to the nation it asks that we look not only at the actions of the instruments of the state but also at those of actors across the population and beyond. Every 'statement', whether produced in a text or a practice, that calls upon 'the nation' for its meaning also reciprocally offers meaning to 'the nation'. Such 'statements' are made by, for instance, commercial organisations, religious groups, professional bodies, sporting associations, educators, storytellers across all media, political groupings, and every 'citizen' in the seeming banalities of their everyday interactions. They can explicitly call up the nation or leave it lying as the implicit foundation upon which their statement can make sense. Their statements can be proclaimed publicly or mumbled in passing through their own homes. Inevitably, and underlying and supporting all of these is the typically implicit construction of the national audience through the geographic scope of subject matter, use of 'our' and 'we', and the integrating use of a common language.

Such statements build discursive constructs, such as 'the nation', which offer each of us positions to take up relative to them. These subject positions create the possibilities of our subjectivity: of who we are; of how we experience our own existence. All of this is understood in relation to discourses: of gender, race, ethnicity, class, sexuality, age, profession, morality, religion, philosophy, masculinity, femininity, health, beauty, politics, family, success, etc. In terms specific to 'the nation' we are invited, called, to position ourselves as members of the nation. This interpellation, to adopt Althusser's (1971) term, demands of us some measure of patriotism, some recognition of fellowship, some promise of commitment.

And, after Saussure, how are we to understand what 'our' nation is, and who 'we' are? Not through some primal connection to an essence, although this is typically taken-as-read, goes-without-saying, but through a learnt understanding of the relative position of 'our' nation within our language system. At a basic level of binary opposites to be 'Irish' is, has become, to be not 'British' or 'English'. Beyond this stretches the structure of nations and nation-states within which to place the 'Irish'. Such a process extends to characteristics supposedly possessed by each nationality.

Derrida identifies in such comparative arrangements the creation and maintenance of hierarchical binary oppositions. 'Irish' is not only opposite to but also, from an 'Irish' perspective, superior to 'British'. 'Naturally', for the British, and those they could persuade

otherwise, it was very much the reverse. The Irish were repeatedly shown in juxtaposition with the English gentleman, or, even more persuasively, gentlewoman, as being savage, violent, treacherous, ungrateful drunks (see, for example, Curtis, 1984). Such judgements are implicit in our construction of statements and work with the hierarchically structuring assumptions within them to shape and give value to our world.

Foucault reminds us, though, to beware of treating any such relationships and indeed categories as eternal, unchanging, fixed. This encourages us to analyse how such discursive constructs *are* maintained, how they come to change, and the tension that exists between the two movements. This is of particular importance, of course, if we wish to intervene in the discourse to achieve some political end. When attempting to understand the production of the Irish/British binary one needs to engage with the history that has produced such meanings.

Role of 'History' in the discursive construction of the nation in Ireland

A.T.Q. Stewart (1977) opens his exploration of the history of the conflict in Northern Ireland by recounting the events of the Siege of Londonderry in 1688 and then those of the commemorative parade in the city in 1968 and the subsequent rioting which fanned the flames of sectarian conflict and contributed to the deepening and hardening of the bitterness that saw 'The Troubles' continue for the next thirty years. He uses this juxtaposition to illustrate his observation that in Northern Ireland history does not lie 'flat on the printed page' (p15). This part of the world (an inevitably doomed attempt not to betray any political stance towards its status and geographical, 'stately' identification) is not, of course, unique in this respect. Its conflict is based upon, or mobilising, depending upon one's reading of the politics, nationalism. As Hobsbawm states:

> Nations without a past are contradictions in terms. What makes a nation is the past, what justifies one nation against others is the past, and historians are the people who produce it. (1996: 255)

Irish nationalists in the late nineteenth century certainly believed history was important to their cause. One branch of the 'Celtic Revival' was the production of 'noble histories' by writers such as Standish O'Grady (1878-81) and Eugene O'Curry (1873). Such histories stressed the antiquity of the Irish nation, its achievements and, implicitly, its authenticity.

For W. B. Yeats the appeal to a somewhat shaky history missed the point and the power of the use of the past in the present. He argued for the telling of the myths and legends of Ireland's heroes in order to inspire similar selfless heroics in the current generation (Skene, 1974: 21-22). The leader of the 1916 rebellion, Patrick Pearse, also stated his belief that

> A heroic tale is more essentially a factor in education than a proposition in Euclid […] What the modern world wants more than anything else, what Ireland wants beyond all other modern countries, is a new birth of the heroic spirit. (1917: 37)

Pearse's school, St. Enda's, featured a large mural of the young Setanta / Cú Chulainn taking up arms, and the boys, many of whom joined him in the rising, acted out the legendary stories in pageants every year. For Pearse and Yeats heroes such as Cú Chulainn provided not only inspiring examples but also an essential past, culture and individuality for the aspirant Irish nation.

In the newly created Irish Free State in the 1920s and 30s Irish history, along with the Irish language and the ancient myths and legends, became a key part of the education of the new generation as 'Irish'. Researchers into Irish education at the time commented upon the remarkable situation they found wherein medieval tales that had been fading out of memory had, within a generation, become known by every child. (Hemprich, 1994: 272)

The possible range of ways of telling the 'story' of the nation was diminished and a particular 'myth' was established. Pearse, the romantic, passionate, nationalistic poet became revered as the father of the nation. Connolly, his fellow leader of the rebellion with his socialist Irish Citizens Army, remained in the shadows.

The histories of 'an Gorta Mór' or 'The Great Hunger', as the Potato Famine of the 1840s became known, cast the British state in a very dim light indeed and supported the anti-colonial stance and narrative framing of many Irish historians and their readers. Historians revisiting these events in the period of the Troubles (e.g. Foster, 1989; Lyons, 1979: O'Brien, 1972) and questioning some of the accusations levelled at the British were strongly criticised for their 'revisionist' histories by those, e.g. Ellis (1989), who saw them as 'neo-colonial'.

In the new statelet of Northern Ireland the stories of the past were told on the gable ends of houses and the streets of the towns and villages. The Unionist population, i.e. those who wanted the union with the rest of the United Kingdom to continue, seen as largely co-terminus with the Protestant population, and who outnumbered the Catholics, assumed to

be Irish Nationalists, by around two to one, had achieved a partial triumph in the outcome of the struggle over independence for the island. They had feared 'Home Rule' for Ireland, with a parliament based in Dublin, would become 'Rome Rule' as the land became a priest-ridden economic backwater. They wanted the island to remain part of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland. Failing that they wished to keep as much of their heartland in the north-east of the island within the union. The six counties, of the nine-county ancient province of Ulster, that they managed to hold formed the new political entity of Northern Ireland with its parliament at Stormont outside Belfast. The history that dominated the landscape here recalled the victory, in 1690 at the Battle of the Boyne, of the Protestant William of Orange over the Catholic James II. Murals on the gable ends of houses showed 'King Billy' on his white charger. (for examples see Rolston, 2010). Hundreds of marches were also held by the 'Loyal Orange Order', and the other Loyal Orders, where loyalty to the Crown and possession and defence of the territory was paraded (Jarman, 1997).

Memory

Such examples clearly illustrate that historians are not the only actors involved in the production and promotion of the past in the present. As Maurice Halbwachs (1992) explains, our 'collective memories' are shaped and maintained by a range of practices and texts that circulate throughout the collective. These include not only histories and autobiographies but also symbols and rituals.

Pierre Nora (1996-98) produced and elicited a range of analyses of sites where such memory work was concentrated in the three-volume collection he edited – *Realms of Memory*, or *Lieux de Mémoire* in the original French. The contents focus on French sites but the insights they present are relevant more widely. In the preface to the English language edition Nora sets out an ambitious agenda for a new type of history: a 'history in multiple voices':

> The central point, the goal is to reinterpret the history of France in symbolic terms, to define France as a reality that is entirely symbolic, and thus to reject any definition that would reduce it to phenomena of another order. Adopting such a view opens the way to a new kind of history: a history less interested in causes than in effects; less interested in actions remembered or even commemorated than in traces left by those actions and in the interaction of those

commemorations; less interested in events themselves than in the construction of events over time, in the disappearance and re-emergence of their significations; less interested in 'what actually happened' than in its perpetual reuse and misuse, its influence on successive presents; less interested in traditions than in the way traditions are constituted and passed on. In short, a history that is neither a resurrection nor a reconstitution nor a reconstruction nor even a representation but, in the strongest possible sense, a 'rememoration' – a history that is interested in memory not as remembrance but as the overall structure of the past within the present: history of the second degree. (1996a: xxiv)

For him, *lieux de mémoire* are key sites for such symbolic memory work and they have come into existence because of the disappearance of *milieux de mémoire* (1996b: 1). Such a claim may well be tested in the streets of Belfast.

Prost (1997, 1998), in the same collection, identifies monuments to the dead and particularly war memorials as powerful sites for the production and maintenance of a collective national memory which affirmed and supported the Republic. He observes that the monuments served as the focus of a 'civic cult' and 'a method of moral education' which induced 'social conformity' (1997: 325)

In this he concurs with Renan who, as well as famously arguing, with reference to the necessity of selectivity in 'national' histories, that forgetting was as important as remembering for the creation of a nation, stressed the crucial place of the remembrance of past suffering in the requirements for the existence of a nation:

In the past, a heritage of glory and a reluctance to break apart, to realize the same program in the future; to have suffered, worked, hoped together; that is worth more than common taxes and frontiers conforming to ideas of strategy; that is what one really understands despite differences of race and language. I have said 'having suffered together'; indeed, common suffering is greater than happiness. In fact, national sorrows are more significant than triumphs because they impose obligations and demand a common effort. (1994 [1882]: p17)

Prost believed that the rituals that took place at First World War memorials in France worked partly through symbolic elements borrowed from Catholicism and thus already familiar to the participants (op cit: 330). Paul Connerton (1989), in his focus on the performance of memory in such rituals, uses the analogy of 'silting' to communicate the

way in which he believes memory is 'accreted' like sedimentary layers onto the body. We then maintain such memories in our ritualistic repetition of movements in future ceremonies. The rituals of Remembrance can be seen as bearing out such a theory. Such intertextual connections and influences are also described by Astrid Erll using the concept of 'premediation' (2010: 392). In this she can be seen to be addressing similar linkages as those explored by Paul Fussell in his work on *The Great War and Modern Memory* (2000 [1975]).

In attempting to explain aspects of 'remediation' Hirsch (1992) uses the term 'postmemory' to describe the phenomenon of the possession of a memory that cannot, due to the passage of time, be strictly 'personal'. Such a concept should prove useful in attempting to understand the commemoration of events of a century ago (Fig.1). How such memory is experienced, how it is transmitted or created, and why, are questions being addressed by scholars in the relatively new field of 'Memory Studies'. These ideas will be explored in more detail in chapters 3 and 6.

Fig.1. Postmemory, Remembrance Cross, Garden of Remembrance, Belfast Cenotaph, Belfast, Nov 2016. © John Poulter

Symbolic Display and Identity in Northern Ireland

In Northern Ireland, history and memory, and their public display, guide and police subjectivity. Murals proliferate in the working-class urban heartlands of the 'two communities'. These depict episodes and characters from the necessarily selective histories of 'each side'. They have official unveilings with speeches that recount the past and state its relevance to the present. Huge bonfires celebrate the three hundred year old victory at the Boyne or a forty year old grievance at the imposition of internment without trial. Marches across the province call the active onto the streets and church and chapel bells call the faithful to their knees to worship the same God in different congregations. This religious divide is reproduced in largely separate schooling. Religion and language also shape the naming of children. Two exiles from the North, meeting on the other side of the world, would be likely to be able to 'place' each other simply from their first names and the names of their respective schools.

Other markers abound. The football teams supported, in Northern Ireland, Glasgow and internationally. The colours worn. The music played and listened to. The colours painted on the kerbstones. The national, and other, flags flown from street lamp posts. The distance between the eyes... Such markers of identity, such badges of identification, have been catalogued and analysed by a variety of writers including Jarman (1997, and with Bryan, 1996, 1998), Rolston (1998, 2003, 2010, 2013), Walker (1996), and Bryson and McCartney (1994). The significance of such symbols and their display has been recognised by those attempting to intervene in the conflict. Legislation regulating, for instance, parades and the display of flags has been enacted. Attempts to enforce such legislation have met with varying degrees of success. The removal by police, for instance, of Loyalist flags but also the Union Jack from outside a Catholic Church resulted in serious rioting in Ballyclare at the height of the annual marching season in July 2011. Similarly, the decision, in December 2012, to bring Belfast City Hall into line with other council buildings across the UK and only fly the Union Jack on 18 days of the year rather than every day led to weeks of protests and riots.

Remembrance

Another annual marker of identity is engagement with the texts and practices of Remembrance of the dead of the First World War and it is this area of discourse that I

intend to analyse here. In the course of this investigation I hope to determine: how the signifiers of Remembrance of the First World War are displayed in Belfast; how such texts and practices are used in the construction of the discourse of national identity in Belfast; and who the actors are in this process.

An examination of Remembrance in Northern Ireland can be illuminated by placing it in the context of Remembrance in the rest of the United Kingdom and further afield. Prost believed that such commemoration in France worked to establish a civic cult in support of the Republic. This function of the monuments and rituals, however, quickly died out. In Britain Bushaway (1992) argues that the 'syntax of sacrifice' came to be dominant with regard to Remembrance in Britain. He believes that this resulted in 'the denial of any political critique' of the war. 'The demons of discontent and disorder were purged.' 'The rituals of remembrance defined what was to be remembered in post-war Britain.' (p161). He points out the importance of the language of Remembrance associated with these rituals, in particular Kipling's line 'Lest we Forget' and demonstrates how Remembrance was explicitly used by the establishment to criticise and defuse political unrest at the time of the General Strike in 1926. This countered the use of the occasion by unemployed ex-soldiers to protest against the government's failure to support them. They decried the construction of 'vast cities of the dead' – the huge and pristine war cemeteries overseas – rather than 'homes fit for heroes'. Whilst Remembrance in Ireland had its own context it would have shared much of this and certainly shared Kipling whose only son died serving in the Irish Guards.

Bushaway also provides a wealth of detail about the chronology of the emergence of the rituals of remembrance and the ambivalent position of the Church of England towards its sanctifying of the dead warriors.

Connelly (2002) offers a detailed history of the development of rituals of Remembrance in part of London between the wars. As such he offers a picture against which can be compared e.g. the experience in Dublin or Belfast. He demonstrates that the ceremonies have not remained unchanged or unchallenged since their inception and outlines the shift from a ceremony owned by the ex-soldiers to one owned by the bereaved. He also examines the increasing role of the Church of England who perhaps saw it as a good day for selling religion and traces the emergence of a strong pacifist movement in the late 1920s and early 1930s that warned against the patriotism stirred by Remembrance rituals.

Jay Winter (1996) is one the foremost chroniclers of the Great War and its legacy. In *Sites of Memory, Sites of Mourning* he addresses memorials to the dead, the rituals that surrounded them and the purpose both served. His focus is more on the therapeutic power such monuments and rituals possessed for the many traumatised individuals who engaged with them. He argues that the memorials enabled 'the melancholic […] to isolate their loss and establish its limits.' (p 115) The rituals and memorials, especially the reading and touching of names helped to 'avoid crushing melancholia and […] passing through mourning, of separating from the dead and beginning to live again.' (ibid) 'Ritual here is a means of forgetting, as much as commemoration [..].' (ibid) Winter stresses the importance of mourning to enable the grief-stricken to pass through the stages of bereavement. 'That process of separation from the dead, of forgetting as much as remembering, is central to this book.' (p 224) His argument is persuasive but I believe that modern day Remembrance of the dead of WWI, separated from, free of, mourning, works differently. For much of the population the rituals of commemoration associated with mourning are now acting as a means of remembering rather than forgetting; of celebration, of *uniting* with rather than separating from the dead; and, in Ireland of re-membering the nation (Poulter, 2009a; Olick, 1999); re-imagining who is 'truly Irish'; opening up the Ireland of the future by going back into its past. The usefulness of the concept of 're-membering' as meaning the exploration of the past to reimagine social relationships and membership of groups has occurred to various writers. Barbara Myerhoff is credited with its first use in the field of narrative therapy in 1982 (cited and explained in Russell and Mayer, 2002: 1). I used it in 'ReMembering the Nation' (2010) unaware of this usage or of Olick's application of it to collective memories.

Other aspects of Remembrance that Winter deals with and which have a particular relevance for my study include what he describes as 'the backward gaze' of writers, politicians, families, etc. 'A complex traditional vocabulary of mourning, derived from classical, romantic or religious forms, flourished, largely because it helped mediate bereavement. The 'sites of memory', like Benjamin's [reading of Klee's] *Angelus Novus*, faced the past, not the future.' (p 223) It is unlikely that this worked in the same way in Ireland. These traditional ways of making sense of military loss were unsettled, undermined and then blown apart by the changing political situation. Having said that, looking back to a 19th century Ireland in a United Kingdom must have been tempting and attractive for some of those, especially nobility and southern Unionists, struggling to come to terms with bereavement.

Winter and Sivan (1999), in attempting to find suitable conceptual tools with which to analyse commemoration of war, have also questioned the usefulness of an all-encompassing concept of 'collective memory' arguing that it suggests a uniformity of memories that is as unrealistic as the likelihood of social shaping having no influence on personal memories. Instead they call for an analysis of what they believe exists between these two abstractions: 'the palpable, messy activity which produces collective remembrance' (p10) Their emphasis on the agency of various actors acting for a variety of reasons and engaging in acts of remembrance that take a multitude of different forms brings a richness to their collection of examples and is a useful exemplar of how such work can be done.

Whilst acknowledging the limitations of Halbwachs' term I, like Olick (2010), continue to find it useful for the emphasis it places on the socially constructed nature of memory. That such construction work should not be considered the sole preserve of national governments and other elites I agree with. I am also content to work within the restrictions that Winter and Savin would put on the usage of 'collective memory' as the overlaps in memories possessed by more than one person which have been both expressed and shared but I would wish to problematize the notion of individually held memories and stress the role of social premediation in the construction of such phenomena.

Graff-McCrae (2010), in her analysis of commemoration in Ireland argues that it is a phenomenon that is inherently conflictual and which also depoliticises the events being commemorated whilst apparently inserting the question of commemoration into political debate. She treats memory as a discourse and thus explores the workings of power in its construction.

Amongst other writers who have addressed Remembrance Gregory (1994) focuses on the significance and power of the ritualised silence at ceremonies. Lacqueur (1994) raises the importance of the role of the government in establishing a standard gravestone and banning any individual designs in those 'Cities of the Dead'. This, he convincingly argues, worked to present the nation of the dead as equals. One could see this as assisting in that imagination of a 'deep horizontal comradeship' that Anderson proposes. Mackenzie (1986) addresses the role of the BBC in disseminating and framing Remembrance and observes that it came to replace Empire Day as the prime annual event in the formal 'celebration' of the nation.

Some writers have addressed the specifically 'Irish' experience of Remembrance. Jane Leonard (1986, 1996, 1997) and Tom Burke (2004, 2005, 2013) have focused in particular on the problems of inter-war Remembrance of those who died whilst serving in the British Army in the context of the emergence of an independent Ireland defining itself against Britain. James Loughlin (2002), meanwhile, examines the importance of Remembrance to the Unionists of the North whilst Lucy and McClure (1997) open up discussion of Remembrance to a much wider population than just these Unionists. Tony Canavan's (2004) critical appraisal of the recent focus on the politics of Remembrance in Ireland questions the revision of views on nationalist involvement in the war. Philip Orr's (2008) second edition of his study of the 36th (Ulster) Division includes a new chapter on the recent changes to the story of the war and Richard Grayson (2009) provides further evidence of the way in which the war cut across political divides in his focus on recruits from Belfast. He too, looks at the recent changes to Remembrance. Various other writers such as Keith Jeffery (2013), Edna Longley (2001), Ian McBride (2001), Ann Rigney (2008), David Fitzpatrick (2013), Anne Dolan (2013) and Brian Hanley (2013, 2014) have also analysed the recent 'rehabilitation' of Remembrance in the Republic of Ireland and offer a variety of perspectives useful to this study. Meanwhile Brian Graham (2010, and with Peter Shirlow, 2002), Kris Brown (2007) and Jason Burke (2016) explore the impact this change has had on the Unionist population and how Remembrance continues to play a major role in the culture of Loyalism.

Chapter Outline

In the chapters that follow I will call on the writers mentioned above and others as I explore the ways in which Remembrance connects with identity in Belfast. Chapter 2 contains details of my methodology whilst chapter 3 provides a survey and evaluation of the theoretical contributions towards an understanding of the concept of 'memory' as this is central to this study. Chapter 4 explains the context in which Remembrance of the Great War developed and deals with the period 1914-1968. Chapter 5 then addresses how the context of the Troubles in Northern Ireland impacted upon Remembrance and how it has since become threaded into the 'Northern Ireland Peace Process'. Chapter 6 sets out to explore how the concepts and perspectives on memory, as introduced in chapter 3, can enable us to theorise the display of the signifiers of Remembrance in the streets of Belfast. Chapter 7 offers details in the form of a case study of the plethora of signifiers of

Remembrance on the, Loyalist, Shankill Road in Belfast. Chapter 8 presents another case study, this time of the largely absent evidence of Remembrance on the, Republican, Falls Road in Belfast. Chapter 9 details a third case study – the project that used Remembrance as a vehicle for reconciliation on the neutral ground of the Island of Ireland Peace Park in Belgium. Finally, chapter 10 attempts to provide a concise summary of my findings and conclusions.

Chapter 2   Methodology

Introduction

I carried out a textual analysis of the public display of symbols of Remembrance of the First World War in Belfast. I did this in order to gain some understanding of the process of discursive production of the discourse of Remembrance. In the process I also learnt more about the workings of the discourses of the nation and national identity. My approach has been informed by an anti-essentialist perspective and an interventionist ethic. In the case of this research this means that I believe categories to be constructed within culture and through difference and I aim to make my work useful to those whose task is to challenge the negative impact of such categorisation.

Ontological perspective

I believe that the conflict in Northern Ireland is both resultant from and productive of a complex range of factors and that an element of this is its relationship with the conceptualisation of the 'nation' and national identity. Certainly, the political/social categories most commonly mobilised to organise and explain the story of the conflict – i.e. 'Unionist' and 'Nationalist' – refer respectively to the perception of one group's desire as being to maintain the union with Great Britain and the other's contrary desire being to fulfil their perceived national identity through the unification of the Irish 'nation'.

I believe that national identity, like all categories, is a discursive construct. As such it is made up of an accumulation and arrangement of numerous texts and practices. Institutions play a central role in the production, circulation and policing of such texts and practices. In the place that is the focus for my research, i.e. Northern Ireland and in particular Belfast, such texts and practices include those relating to the memorialisation – or, as I will refer to it throughout, Remembrance – of military service and death in the First World War.

Examples of texts include war memorials, street murals, wreaths, 'Remembrance crosses', poppies, and war graves. They also include academic and non-academic history books, novels, films, plays, news reports across a range of media, conference proceedings, community discussion documents, social media posts, other online forums, exhibitions, museums, paintings, posters, and tourism marketing material. Practices include attendance

at Remembrance ceremonies, the laying of wreaths, the planting of crosses, the wearing of poppies, the visiting of war graves, and the production and engagement with all the other texts that promote, challenge and discuss issues of Remembrance.

The institutions that could be argued to be influential with regard to the discourse of Remembrance in Belfast include the U.K. government, the Northern Ireland Assembly, Belfast City Council, the local political parties, military regimental associations, other veterans' groups, the Royal British Legion, the British Army, institutions of civil society such as the Orange Order, the Apprentice Boys, etc., ex-paramilitary groups and particularly the Ulster Volunteer Force (UVF), as well as various media institutions such as the BBC and the Belfast Telegraph, the academy and particularly historians, and various community organisations. Some of these institutions operate both within and outside Northern Ireland. Those that could be seen to be more clearly external to Northern Ireland and yet still involved include the government of the Irish Republic, the Commonwealth War Graves Commission, 'Hollywood', the British National Party, the United States Army and Glasgow Celtic Football Club.

As well as such institutions there is also a wide range of individuals operating at varying levels of remove from them such as writers, graffiti writers, playwrights, artists, amateur historians, relatives of the dead, etc. The meanings constructed by the discourses are also subject to contingency including events far from Belfast such as the war in Afghanistan.

I believe that Remembrance is recruited into the construction of national identity, and thus into justifying conflict based on competing nationalistic claims, through its use as a marker of identity. This can only work because of its establishment as a marker of difference. That it is such a marker is due to discursive work carried out both in the newly 'Free' State of Eire in the inter-war years and in Northern Ireland during the past century but particularly during the Troubles of the late twentieth century (see Chapters 4 and 5). However, this status as a signifier of difference gives it the power to call identification into question: to change the meaning of certain markers of national identity and thus shape the imagining of the nation.

Symbolic work can achieve shifts in the meaning of the past which, in turn, lead to shifts in the meaning of those aspects of the present that draw upon the past for their meaning and justification. Shifts in the 'nation', rooted in the past, have the potential to lead to shifts in national identity and the elision or erosion of difference. As such, creative symbolic work

can challenge reified categories. It can shine a light on the scaffolding and pick out the chisel marks.

Epistemology and Methodology

My understanding of culture and how it can be researched is informed by Saussurian semiology as developed by Barthes and then supplemented by Derrida and Foucault. Working inwards from the building blocks of binary opposites, Saussure (1960) demonstrated that meaning is relational rather than essential. If we are to understand the meaning of any term, any sign, any category, we need to look outside of it to its Other(s) rather than attempt to mine it for some ideal essence. It is by understanding the structure within which the item is placed that we can then read off meaning from its position relative to its neighbours.

Moreover, as Derrida (1976) insisted, if all meaning is relational then we have no starting point, no eternal and universal reference point from which we can start to unravel the puzzle. Meaning is always in flux, never finished, never certain. And yet most of us are competent communicators and interpreters of meaning. Foucault (1980) argues that this is possible because of the workings of power. This works to temporarily fix meaning. To construct knowledge that accords with particular existent 'regimes of truth'. Such knowledges are discursive constructs in which an accumulation of texts and practices, usually organised by and constitutive of institutions, cohere to structure the ways in which it is possible to think, talk and 'live' with regard to particular aspects of our lives.

Attempting to research culture, armed with this epistemological perspective, therefore involves attempting to determine the ways in which power plays out in the production, circulation and shaping of different discourse. This necessarily demands an engagement with the texts and practices that appear to be connected with a discourse and the role of institutions in their existence and form.

I realise that working with this view of knowledge requires the researcher to be aware that such an approach is itself grounded in just such a regime of truth. The knowledge produced by the researcher, therefore, is recognised as partial, contingent and connected with power. The most obvious seat of such power is the researcher themselves. This can be usefully understood in at least two ways. The researcher within the academy has the power to speak to the academy and beyond 'for' those with less credibility as producers of

knowledge. This power is accompanied by a responsibility for the consequences of what we 'say' in this role. The researcher also has the power to represent the world of the researched. What meanings is s/he going to construct from the phenomena studied? In what ways do these accord with those meanings produced locally by those under study? Whilst a poststructuralist approach to meaning would hardly judge a reading by its concordance with another, any hope of explicitly intervening in the discourse through an engagement with the population requires that the researcher's reading is recognisable and 'makes sense' for that population. It is this realisation that encourages me to acquire knowledge of the history, politics and culture of Northern Ireland and also to test responses to my reading of phenomena in conversation with knowledgeable locals. Such a desire has, I have found, been misinterpreted as a doomed ambition to discuss poststructuralist theory with my respondents. Whilst this is something that I believe would have a significant positive effect on conflict transformation it was not my aim during this study. Instead I had the more easily achievable objective of checking my understanding of some of the main intended meanings of the signifiers of Remembrance in the area.

Barthes (1977), like Foucault, also addressed the fixing of meaning and similarly tied it to power. For him the production and maintenance of such 'myth' – naturalised, de-politicised language – served the interests of power and this could be exposed, and power challenged, by the demythologising and re-politicising of such examples. I find 'myth' to be a useful term for my researches not only because of the persuasiveness of Barthes analysis but also because of its residual connection, via its traditional usage, with organisational narratives from the past. In looking at Remembrance I am engaging with the past: with history, memory and myth.

Pierre Nora's (1996b) tortuous attempts to separate, and then mobilise, history and memory as distinct analytical concepts serves as a warning of the potential problems of this field. Historians operate within their own regime of truth, with their own agendas, fashions, perspectives and aims. The wider field of 'memory' is similarly complex. Storytellers operating in 'both' areas are involved in the construction of what Halbwachs (1980) identified as the 'collective memory'. Their stories become myth to the extent that they accord with the dominant narrative within the discourse of Remembrance. Yet other stories, acting as discursive interventions, challenge such myth and, given critical mass, re-politicise and de-naturalise it. This opens up moments of possibility: of new thinking, new

connections, new narratives, before what is emergent once more becomes dominant and difficult to question (Williams 1961).

When attempting to apply these epistemological perspectives to methodology researching 'visual culture' could also appear to pose certain problems in terms of the interpretation of data, and the communication of findings. The former, from a poststructuralist perspective, is hardly unique to non-written or non-verbal phenomena. The reading of a visual non-written text such as a poppy has the advantage, from such a perspective, that it is clearly contingent, partial and thus both tentative and open to change. It cannot hide behind the apparently fixed meaning of words and it therefore is bound to suggest the possibility of new meanings. The latter issue of the communication of findings is, with the communication tools now at our disposal, no longer a problem. Indeed the existence of visual imagery within our research data enhances the possibility that our findings will attract and hold attention and also provoke debate and other forms of engagement. I also believe that there is merit in the exploration of the ways in which the visual could be seen as a valuably indeterminate way of communicating and opening up new possibilities within the production and dissemination of cultural research (Pink 2013).

Attempts at an ethnographic understanding of, and presentation of, the worldviews of others is, since the decline of the realist approach to ethnography, inevitably to be questioned. Van Maanen, however, encourages us to continue to work ethnographically and also points out that the recognition of the contingency of meaning does not absolve us from the on-going requirement to tell our story 'through the hard work of presenting evidence, providing interpretations, elaborating analogies, invoking authorities, working through examples, marshalling the tropes, and so on' (1995: 22). His writing style encourages us to add to his list 'being an entertaining and creative storyteller'. I would see my walking of the streets to accord with an ethnographic approach to attempting to come to an understanding of a place and its people. Placing myself in this place amongst them is invaluable not only because of the opportunities it affords to produce data – for instance 'opportunistic sampling' (Patton, 1990: 179) – but also for the awareness it brings of my own subjectivity, difference and perspective. Amanda Coffey's work on *The Ethnographic Self* and autoethnography are useful here.

My primary method of producing visual data is the use of a camera. This brings more than just the efficiency of recording detail to the research experience. As Emmel and Clark (2011) conclude:

> [P]hotographs form the basis of our visual data, they offer more than just information about what we observe in our field site. They allow us to map our reflexive engagement with the research field. They are a kind of visual research diary, offering clues to how we respond to the field over the course of research. They sharpen our gaze through framing the field in the viewfinder. Furthermore, they stimulate an awareness that we are in the act of generating data [...]. (para 39)

Working with the concept of discourse attracts some criticism. For some it is the fact that it is part of the postmodern turn with its attendant scepticism for the concept of truth that has damned it. For others for whom this is not a problem it is its vagueness that renders it unhelpful as an organising category. Lynch (2007) illustrates the latter position in his argument that discourse is not 'analytically distinct from built environments and the bodies that inhabit them' (p500). This criticism is understandable given the (almost?) universal applicability of the term to the analysis of culture. My desire to make my findings communicable has, hopefully, kept me aware of the need for clarity and usefulness in my use of terms.

Martin Barker criticises discourse theorists for making assumptions about the presumed power of discourses and presumed existent institutions and discursive resources (p150). He argues that it is essential for qualitative researchers using 'discourse' to convince the reader of their 'trustworthiness' (p163). Grounding my analysis in an understanding drawn from a wide range of contextualising information is aimed at achieving just this. He also argues that it is important to be able to justify one's selection of a sample or 'corpus' and believes that 'independent evidence of the cultural importance of a corpus' will lead to advantages to the researcher in terms of understanding and perceived relevance (p165). I would argue that the prevalence of First World War imagery in Belfast is proof of its 'cultural importance' and therefore positions it as: worthy of study; enables the identification of aspects of WWI that appear particularly important; and suggests that the outcomes of the analysis will appear relevant to that population.

As part of my presentation of evidence I have provided as much quantitative data as enables the reader to gain an understanding of the prevalence and distribution of the material I identify as relevant. Such contextual data serves to support statements regarding the existence of the phenomena and why I would see examples as either typical or atypical.

Awareness of the possibility, indeed inevitability, of critique, and also a desire to produce something more than just an interesting story, has encouraged me to be continually reflexive in my carrying out of the research. An example of this would be the 'member checking' (Richards, 2009: 149) of comparing my readings with those produced by my key individuals.

In addition to providing a synchronic analysis of such data I am also presenting a diachronic one. Repeat visits to certain sites, for instance Belfast Cenotaph, the Shankill Road and the Falls Road, have enabled me to produce data that can be analysed for evidence of continuity and change. Indeed my research is enriched by such longitudinal study (Ruspini, 440: 2008) as it enables me to 'see' in more detail. I have become aware of such continuities and any changes stand out to me.

Methods

Bearing these methodological issues in mind I used five main methods of data production: on-going literature review, walking the streets, photography of visual data at key sites, participant observation at ceremonies and interviewing of key individuals.

Continuing to review literature provided me with material that enriched my contextual understanding of the culture of Northern Ireland and the position of the First World War within it. It also enabled me to continue to explore theoretical and methodological perspectives and approaches as part of my reflexive approach to the research experience. As well as this it directly produced data as the insights it furnished me with enabled me to then identify significant elements within, for example, the photographic images I had produced.

Walking the streets on my visits each November and July enabled me to: maintain knowledge of the field in which the texts are displayed and thus an ability to add contextual and intertextual meaning to my analysis of the texts; identify changes and perceive patterns; and produce more data. Recurrent visits also enable the revisioning of understanding of the phenomena experienced on each walk in the light of knowledge and understanding acquired through the use of the other methods, e.g. interviews and on-going reading. In using this method I was following the work of Emmel and Clark (2009) who used their 'walkaround' method to gain an understanding of the geographical and cultural context of their study.

As part of this method they employed reflective diaries. My method for reflection was audio-recorded reflections immediately after each part of my field trips. This combined with the photographic data to provide a record of what I had seen, felt and thought as I moved through the space I was exploring. Whilst, like them, I retraced my route on a regular basis, I allowed events, e.g. a parade, or conversations, e.g. about a new mural, to guide me off my beaten track on occasions. The walk also enabled me to engage with aspects of the context in more detail, e.g. exploring the items on sale in Culturlann, the Sinn Féin shop, the Shankill Historical and Cultural Society shop and Ulster Souvenirs. It also led, on occasion, to opportunistic and then snowball sampling which produced very rich data.

Photography of visual data has been my main method of data production. I photographed all examples of texts (wreaths, crosses, graffiti, memorials, murals, graves, etc.) that referenced or connected to references to the First World War. In order to make the research do-able I had to narrow down my focus to Belfast, and within the city to certain sites. Belfast Cenotaph in the city centre is the official site of Remembrance for the city and thus 'province' and the Shankill Road is a 'Loyalist area' rich in the signifiers of Remembrance. The 'Republican' Falls Road, by contrast, is notable for their absence. This latter area includes Belfast City Cemetery and Milltown Cemetery which, with their mix of commemorative sites, or *lieux de mémoire* (Nora 1996), including memorials to both Republican and British Army war dead make for complex and fascinating locations for analysis. I believe that such a sample provides the material necessary to engage in an exploration and illustration of the discourse of Remembrance in Belfast.

In order to gain some contextualising understanding of the use of such texts I also produced photographic data at other sites of Remembrance. Amongst numerous places visited within Belfast were Dundonald Cemetery on the edge of Unionist East Belfast and also many sites on the Newtownards Road leading out to it. Further afield in Northern Ireland I visited war memorials at the Diamond in Derry/Londonderry, Enniskillen, Randalstown, Castledawson, Ballycastle, Antrim and Kilrea. In the Republic of Ireland I produced data at a number of sites. In Dublin I explored St Patrick's Church of Ireland Cathedral and also attended a ceremony there featuring the President. I visited the National War Memorial at Islandbridge and also various sites within Trinity College. In the rest of the Republic I visited memorials at a number of places including Castlebar, Athlone, Birr, Bray, Westport and Drogheda. In Great Britain I visited many memorials in London,

Glasgow, Leeds and many small towns and villages. I also attended ceremonies in Leeds, Bradford and Wootton Bassett. Outside of the 'British Isles' I visited Thiepval, Messines, Tyne Cot, Ypres, and many other sites of the 'Western Front'. I also visited various sites on the Gallipoli peninsula in Turkey and also several in Germany. Experiencing and producing data at such a wide range of sites enabled me to perceive what was typical and also distinctive about Remembrance in Belfast.

I also chose, for reasons of access, to concentrate my focus more on the texts rather than practices of Remembrance. I am aware that it can be argued that cultural texts only come into view – i.e. gain relevance and meaning – in the course of their use in practices. I have been a participant observer at several ceremonies that interact with these texts but by their very nature they tend to happen simultaneously and thus a lone researcher cannot attend more than a couple in any one year (e.g. Somme Commemoration and Remembrance Sunday). The traces left after them and the permanent and semi-permanent signs of Remembrance, however, are available for observation and exploration at a much wider range of times. They are left open to further interactions and therefore exist and produce meanings outside of these timetabled moments. My focus, however, was on such heightened periods of Remembrance and thus I typically visited my key sites over Remembrance weekend in November and also around the Somme commemorations in July.

I did attend Remembrance Sunday (November) and Somme commemoration (July) ceremonies at Belfast Cenotaph on several occasions. I also attended Somme commemoration ceremonies at the Thiepval monument and at the nearby Ulster Tower. I attended a Remembrance Sunday ceremony, at which the President of the Irish Republic laid a wreath, at St. Patrick's Church of Ireland cathedral in Dublin. Also in Dublin I attended an ANZAC (Australian and New Zealand Army Corps) commemoration of the Gallipoli campaign held every April. I also attended Remembrance Sunday ceremonies in Leeds and Bradford and observed the lack of a Somme commemoration ceremony on the 1st July in Leeds. I observed small and large parades to war memorials both in the centre of Belfast and on the Shankill Road and elsewhere in Belfast.

As well as these ceremonies I was able to attend I also watched the representation of many ceremonies on screen. These ranged from mobile phone footage, posted on YouTube, of local parades and ceremonies on the Shankill to the professionally produced and nationally broadcast programmes from the BBC. As an example of the latter, I watched and analysed

the BBC's broadcast of Remembrance Sunday from the Cenotaph in London every year for ten years (see Chapter 4 for a presentation of the insights gained into the mediated construction of Remembrance from this analysis).

The interviews I conducted were of a small sample of key individuals (as encouraged by Blumer, cited in Plummer, 2001: 154). These were all individuals who were happy to talk on the topic because of their involvement in and promotion of various aspects of it. Such respondents included: Republicans and Loyalists close to or members of the ex-paramilitary groups; community workers; members of the 'Journey of Reconciliation' project and the 'Fellowship of Messines'; battlefield tour guides; participants in such tours including Loyalist ex-paramilitaries and Gaelic Athletic Association (GAA) members; etc. Strategic use of snowball sampling (Patton, 1990: 176) enabled me to gain material from an important group of actors in this field through the use of gatekeepers. As mentioned above, some of these contacts arose out of opportunistic sampling at sites of Remembrance and such encounters also led to the production of some rich material.

Most of these interviews were conducted face-to-face. I interviewed Glen Barr in his office in (London)Derry, Tom Hartley in the Sinn Fein offices in Belfast City Hall, Alan McFarland MLA in the Ulster Unionist party offices in Stormont, and Kris Hopkins MP, the Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, at the Houses of Parliament, London. Alex Maskey, first Sinn Fein mayor of Belfast, I talked to at the Swarthmore Centre when he was speaking in Leeds. I talked to Daniel Mulhall, Irish Ambassador to the UK at an academic conference in Newtown, Wales, where he was delivering a paper on Irish nationalist and British Army officer Tom Kettle, and again, and at greater length, after a talk on the centenary of the Easter Rising in Bradford town hall. I talked to Tom Burke of the Royal Dublin Fusiliers Association (RDFA) on two occasions, each time for several hours, and before that had spent an afternoon talking to his colleague in the organisation, Sean Connolly. These conversations took place in various venues in Dublin and the latter included a personal guided tour of some fascinating traces of Remembrance in Trinity College Dublin. It was there, after a symposium on Ireland and the Great War, that I also managed to talk to the novelist Sebastian Barry, whose Booker Prize-nominated *A Long, Long Way* brings to life the impact of the war and the Rising on a Dublin family. Philip Orr talked to me at length in Belfast City Hall and we were then joined by Tom Hartley for a lively discussion on Remembrance and national identity. I interviewed in their homes members of the first GAA club to engage with the Journey of Reconciliation initiative.

Several of the ex-paramilitary engagers with the 'Journey' I interviewed by phone. I also conducted follow-up interviews with Glen Barr in this way.

As well as these planned conversations I also talked to numerous people at various sites in the field. These included visitors to: the Irish National War Memorial at Islandbridge in Dublin, the cenotaph in Belfast, Thiepval monument to 'the missing of the Somme', the Ulster Tower at Thiepval, the monument to the 16th (Irish) Division at Wytschaete (Messines), the Island of Ireland Peace Park and the International Peace Village at Messines. I also talked to those running the Republican Museum in Conway Mill, the Sinn Fein shop and Culturlann bookshop on the Falls and the Ulster Souvenirs and Shankill Historical and Cultural Society shops on the Shankill.

All those I talked to, whether in a prearranged interview or an opportunistic conversation, I chose to talk to because of their involvement with elements of commemoration and particularly Remembrance. I ensured that I secured the views of members of those groups most active in the maintenance and shaping of the discourse of Remembrance in Northern Ireland. These included members of local (ex)paramilitary organisations, Republican and Unionist local and regional politicians, a UK government minister, key 'popular' writers on Remembrance in Ireland, and key figures in organisations leading initiatives using Remembrance as part of the Northern Ireland 'Peace Process'. They also included people working in shops, museums and other centres in which the material of Remembrance was displayed and people engaging with the public material of Remembrance at a range of monuments and memorials.

An example of one 'snowball' of respondents which started from opportunistic sampling illustrates the way in which such an approach can be hugely beneficial to the researcher. I attended a Remembrance Sunday service at St. Patrick's, Church of Ireland, cathedral in Dublin, during which Mary McAleese, the President of Ireland, laid a laurel wreath. After the service I walked around inside the cathedral taking in the multitude of memorials of all types to those who had died in service to the British Empire. Finally I went to look at the memorial book listing the names and other details of all those Irishmen who had died in the Great War. A woman supporting an elderly man approached and I made room for them in front of the book. I commented on the quality of the elaborate decorative work around each page and, on hearing my accent, the woman asked me where I was from. It turned out that she had once lived a few hundred metres from my workplace in Leeds. She wondered what had brought me to this event and I explained the nature of my research.

She called out to a man passing by. He was Sean Connolly of the RDFA. He agreed to be interviewed the next day. After our interview he said that I should talk to Tom Burke, the founder of the RDFA. When I subsequently did so, Tom provided me with a list of names, including Glen Barr and Alan McFarland MLA. I found that the mention of Tom's name smoothed my way into these and several other interview opportunities. These respondents in turn, and especially Glen Barr, connected me with numerous other individuals and groups whose contributions were invaluable to my research. All of these openings became possible as a result of placing myself in an appropriate place, engaging with the people using that place, being open with them about my research and establishing trust over the course of these and subsequent conversations.

Analysis

My analysis is informed and guided by the use of the various theoretical perspectives as mentioned above. In particular I am using an understanding of meaning as relational and contingent and tracing the complex operations of intertextuality, metaphor and metonymy in the construction of meaning within and across texts. In this I am guided by Saussure's insights into structure with the added influence of Derrida regarding the lack of fixity of meaning and the inevitability and necessity of eternal deferral of closure as supplementary meanings come into view. How they appear there and how their meaning is influenced has been a key question for my research. In looking at this I am encouraged by Foucault to search out those statements, and hence the power to 'speak' them, that construct dominant understandings of any discourse. For me the 'statements' are visual.

Barthes' approach encourages me to attempt to identify and explore myth: the texts that establish it and maintain it and discursive interventions that threaten a demythologising.

In all of this I aim to uncover the workings of discourse and thus identify the 'power to intervene'. It is here that I see my interviews with key informants as being essential in providing me with narratives relating to engagement with Remembrance.

Running in parallel with these aims is the process of reflexively considering my own role as the instrument of the research. I mention this again in relation to analysis because I wanted my research to be iterative in that analysis of data would lead to consideration of the methods of further data generation and that reflecting on the analysis of data would also lead to adaptations and departures in terms of methods of analysis.

In analysing each image I looked for any signifiers of Remembrance and how they were being deployed to construct particular meanings. Another key element in this construction was other signifiers present that made it clear who had produced the artefact etc. and these I also looked for. Most of these images contained a complex collection of symbols and icons that are part of the discourses of Loyalism, Republicanism, Britishness, Irishness and Christianity. These include signifiers of key historical individuals and events.

This analysis enabled me to identify and then read in combination these various signs to construct some meanings of the text. I would make notes on these that included enough detail to enable easy searching within my notes. At regular intervals I would revisit these images and also when selecting some for use in teaching or at a conference presentation. On these occasions I would often perceive previously unnoticed elements and potential new meanings. I would add these to my notes.

Where I was unfamiliar with certain elements I would research these in literature, online and/or through 'member checking' with knowledgeable locals to ensure that I was making no basic errors of fact.

Over the course of the years of my research I came to construct increasingly complex meanings from these texts which built up layers of meaning through the use of metonymy, metaphor and intertextuality drawing on a variety of myths.

This ongoing analysis will not stop with the publication of this thesis. In presenting my findings I have also presented many of the photographs I took in the field. These will be read by a variety of new readers who are likely to bring new insights into the meaning and function of these texts of Remembrance. Enabling this potential production of knowledge supports the belief of Pink (2013) and Chaplin (1994) in the productive nature of photographic data in the research process.

Chapter 3   The Form and Function of 'Collective' Memory

Researching Remembrance of the First World War in Northern Ireland requires an exploration of how the events of the past are 'remembered' in the present. How can such remembering be conceptualised? What function(s) does it perform? How is it carried out? Who is involved and why? Are the phenomenon and the answers to these questions fixed or changing? If the former, in the context of a changing world, how and why? If the latter, why, in what way, and with what effect?

In carrying out this exploration I will assess the usefulness of, amongst other things, the range of concepts, perspectives and approaches that have developed within what has become known as the field of 'Memory Studies'. This multidisciplinary field provides an intellectual space for sociologists, historians, social psychologists, political and cultural theorists, amongst others, to explore how stories of past events are selected, shaped, reproduced, circulated and received within society. There are, of course, others focusing on the neurological workings of what we call memory in the brain of the individual and, whilst their work provides insights sometimes exploited by the former group this focus on individual psychology is seen as a separate area. Memory Studies focus on the study of socialised memory. It is the aim of this chapter to provide a survey of the concepts, perspectives and approaches of the field as they apply to the conceptualisation of memory and the functions that it serves and evaluate to what extent and in what ways they can be usefully applied in researching the role of Remembrance of the First World War in the construction of national identity in Northern Ireland. Chapter 6 will go on to explore the ways in which the processes deemed to achieve these functions have been theorised and assess the usefulness of these concepts to the case under study. In order for this application to be understood by the reader chapters 4 and 5 will first explain the 'Irish' context of Remembrance as it developed over the last century.

Conceptualising Memory

Whilst those attempting to present the history of Memory Studies have identified various writers whose works address some aspect of memory, could be argued to have influenced subsequent thinking, and precede him, French sociologist Maurice Halbwachs is generally acknowledged as the instigator of the field. His 1925 publication *Social Frameworks of*

Memory (*Les Cadres sociaux de la mémoire)* was followed in 1941 by *The Legendary Topography of the Holy Land* (*La Topographie légendaire des évangiles en terre sainte: étude de mémoire* collective) and the development of his ideas was published posthumously as *La mémoire collective* in 1950 (*The Collective Memory in 1980*). In these works he argued that what we tend to think of as individual memory is in fact social. The apparent individuality of our remembrances is purely the result of the complexity of socialised memories resultant from our engagement with the various different groups we have been a part of. He acknowledges that "[w]hile the collective memory endures and draws strength from its base in a coherent body of people, it is individuals as group members who remember." (Coser, 1992: 22) However 'their' memories, their 'thoughts and ideas, feelings and passions' are actually inspired and shaped by some group. (Halbwachs, 1980: 44). This complexity results in not one society-wide collective memory but rather 'there are as many collective memories as there are groups and institutions in society' (Coser, 1992: 22). Contemporary critiques of the first publication of these ideas argued for the retention of the concept of individual memory in some cases of memory but also acknowledged the role of the social in all our thinking (e.g. Bloch, 2011 [1925]; and Blondel, 2011 [1926]). As more recent analysts of Halbwachs' ideas have pointed out, he never completely dismissed the notion of individual memory but argued that 'the past is not really preserved in the individual memory. "Fragments" persist there, but not complete recollections. What makes them true memories are collective representations.' (Marcel and Mucchielli, 2010: 142).

The term 'collective memory' has been taken up and used to try to understand various cases including the phenomenon that dominates the field of Memory Studies – the Holocaust. Peter Novick (2000) argues that Halbwach's concept is useful in understanding this phenomenon experienced by millions but also more widely 'remembered' and with a dominant narrative (p3). Others, such as Alon Confino (2010: 81), have critiqued the use of the term. He argues that before there was the study of collective memory there was the study of 'collective mentalities'. This was a central aspect of the Annales school of history. Confino believes the study of memory lacks the richness of the study of mentalities which looked at memories within the whole range of ways in which people made sense of and behaved in their society. For him memory studies have become predictable: event, representation, appropriation. These analyses, he argues, need to expand to consider memories not in isolation but in relation to each other and to society as a whole. The

approach he advocates looks very similar to the cultural theorist Raymond Williams' quest to understand the 'structures of feeling' of a past era within a particular society.

> The term is difficult, but 'feeling' is chosen to emphasize a distinction from more formal concepts of 'world-view' or 'ideology'. It is not only that we must go beyond formally held and systematic beliefs, though of course we have always to include them. It is that we are concerned with meanings and values as they are actively lived and felt, and the relations between these and formal or systematic beliefs are in practice variable … (Williams, 1977: 131)

Williams went on to describe such structures as 'social experience in solution', usually connected to emergent social formations and composed of 'particular linkages, particular emphases and suppressions, and, in what are often its most recognizable forms, particular deep starting-points and conclusions.' (ibid: 134)

Alieda Assman and her husband Jan Assman made some of the most influential contributions to the study of socialised memory by proposing a distinction between what Halbwachs called collective memory and they renamed 'communicative memory' and 'cultural memory'. Communicative memory, in their schema, is the product of three or four interacting generations and therefore has a lifespan of around eighty to a hundred years. Beyond this period memory becomes very patchy. But the even more distant past is 'remembered' through 'cultural memory'. They argue that, whilst Halbwachs identification of 'collective memory' was a valuable exposition of the connection between individual and social 'memory', distinctions need to be made between those memories that are constructed and maintained through social interaction and those that exist over a longer period of time and survive through the construction of a formalised 'cultural memory' connected to objects such as memorials etc. and codified rituals presided over by memory specialists such as priests (J. Assman, 2011 [1997]: 212-215). Many subsequent studies in the field of memory have found this distinction, and the conceptualisation of 'cultural memory' in particular to be useful.

Zierold (2010: 401), however, in the course of an exploration of memory and media, questions the relevance for studies of contemporary remembrance of a model that was developed in the course of studies of a pre-modern society i.e. the Egypt researched by the Assmans. A second problem with Assman's term is the one that besets every usage of the word 'cultural'. Scholars in different disciplines rarely share the same conceptualisation of what is being referred to using this adjective. This is demonstrated in the 'Response to our critics' by the editors (Olick et al) of *The Collective Memory Reader* (2011). In their

response to criticisms re perceived omissions in their collection they deal with 'media and narrative' before turning to the 'cultural' and agreeing that they should have included more works of 'imaginative literature' before showing that they realise that narratives also exist outside of the literary – and giving a mention to psychology and philosophy. It is possible that they felt that the wider sphere of culture – leisure activities, the organisation of work, religion, sport, design, advertising, food and drink, education, art, fashion, class, ethnicity, gender, sexuality, gardening, shopping, travel, etc., etc. – had been dealt with or at least touched upon already in their reader but the reductive way in which they use the term calls this into doubt. 'Cultural memory' then, as used by the Assmans, is an unfortunately ambiguous and confusing word. Critics who perceive the project of Cultural Studies as involving an overreaching academic land-grab would also point to the scattergun nature of the above list as indicative of another reason to be wary of the usage of the word 'cultural'.

There is another, more specific, problem with the Assman's dichotomising of memory. Jan Assman explains that: 'for us the concept of 'communicative memory' includes those varieties of collective memory that are based exclusively on everyday communications' (2011: 212). 'Cultural memory', on the other hand, is 'characterized by its distance from the everyday' (ibid: 213). By contrast with the movable 'horizon' of communicative memory, 'cultural memory' has a fixed horizon comprised of 'fateful events of the past' (ibid). Whilst identifying these elements of socialised memory is useful, I would argue that attempting to separate them as is encouraged by the presentation of them as distinct types of memory militates against an exploration of the way in which the ancient past is produced, shaped and put to use in everyday communications. Likewise, it also discourages analysis of how 'the everyday' is shaped by 'fateful events of the past'. The memory of 'now' and the memory of key fixed points in the past are not separate from one another and must be understood as continually in dialogue.

Another distinction which has the capacity to stall analysis, but which is also a useful highlighter of epistemological inconsistency, and is much debated within the field, is that between 'memory' and 'history'. Pierre Nora, editor of the highly influential three-volume collection of French case studies of memory – Realms of Memory: The Construction of the French past (*Les Lieux de Mémoire*) published in the 1990s – entitles his introduction 'Between Memory and History'. He begins provocatively by claiming that 'memory is constantly on our lips because it no longer exists' (1996b:1). He explains that the work focuses on specific 'sites' of memory *'lieux de mémoire*, in which a residual sense of

continuity remains. *Lieux de mémoire* exist because there are no longer any *milieux de mémoire*, settings in which memory is a real part of everyday experience.' (ibid). He believes that what he describes as 'true memory' has been 'swept away by history'. History is intellectual, non-religious and critical. Memory is a mixture of emotion and magic.

> Memory is life, always embodied in living societies and as such in permanent evolution, subject to the dialectic of remembering and forgetting, unconscious of the distortions to which it is subject, vulnerable in various ways to appropriation and manipulation, and capable of lying dormant for long periods only to be suddenly reawakened. History, on the other hand, is the reconstruction, always problematic and incomplete, of what is no longer. […] Memory wells up from the groups that it welds together, […] history belongs to everyone and to no one and therefore has a universal vocation. (ibid: 3)

However, Nora's use of both concepts is at times difficult to distinguish. Having earlier claimed that history has swept away memory he later states that history is a 'victim of memory' (ibid: 4) He also appears to make a distinction between 'memory' as life and 'collective memory' as a construction as he claims that 'every major revision of historical method has been intended to broaden the base of collective memory' (ibid). So, for Nora, 'true memory' is something which, in times past, suffused the lives of the people. It has been driven out by the intellectual, critical, non-religious, non-magical work of history. What has replaced it is 'collective memory' constructed through history and depending on *lieux de mémoire* to 'consecrate' and support these memories.

Historian Carl Becker also uses the descriptor 'magical' but in his case to deride the idea of an objective, scientific history that 'just lets the facts speak for themselves'. Historians speak through their selection and presentation of 'facts'. The facts take on their particular meaning depending on how they are used. (2011 [1932]: 123-125) His main targets are those historians who make such claims whilst presenting overtly nationalistic histories. Such examples call into question Jan Assman's claim, echoing Nora (above), that whereas 'memory, even cultural memory, is local, egocentric and specific to a group and its values' 'knowledge has a universalist perspective, a tendency towards generalization and standardization.' (2010: 113) Becker has a much more postmodern take on his profession. Historians, he happily states, are 'of that ancient and honourable company of wise men of the tribe, of bards and story-tellers and minstrels, of soothsayers and priests, to whom in successive ages has been entrusted the keeping of the useful myths.' (op cit: 122) Peter Burke, writing half a century later, echoes this appraisal, if slightly less playfully, and with an eye on identifying some distinction between what he sees as the myth-making tendencies of social memory and the recording of the past of history, by describing his

fellow historians as 'the guardians of awkward facts, the skeletons in the cupboard of social memory' (op cit: 192) But as both Becker and Burke acknowledge, history is a social construct, with Burke describing Halbwachs' differentiation between social memory as a construct and history as objective record as 'a rather old-fashioned positivist distinction.' (2011 [1989]: 188)

Yet this distinction lives on. The sociologist and historian, and prominent contributor to the field of Memory Studies, Jeffrey K. Olick, in attempting to isolate and set to one side this problematic separation, cites a communication from another authority within the field, American sociologist Barry Schwartz, who observes that: 'Sharp opposition between history and collective memory has been our Achilles Heel, causing us to assert unwillingly, and often despite ourselves, that what is not historical must be "invented" or "constructed" – which transforms collective memory study into a kind of cynical muckraking' (Olick, 2010: 159) This is presented by Olick shortly after, in the course of an explanation of his perspective on the usefulness of the term 'collective memory', he implicitly equates the past with history and the present with memory. This demonstrates the difficulty of avoiding reification or at least confusion during attempts to critique such a well-established term as 'history'. Schwarz, in his communication, bemoans the continual setting up of an opposition between history and memory but then instantly uses such an opposition to define collective memory i.e. that which is 'not historical'. Olick also attempts to make use of this supposed binary opposition whilst explicitly calling it into question. This seems to be treating history as having somehow managed to avoid the subjective, complex process of social construction which he describes as forming collective memory.

Historian of the Great War, Jay Winter, suggests that an answer lies in a combining of the two terms into one – 'historical remembrance'. For him this rescues us from perceiving memory as some 'vague cloud which exists without agency' and from seeing history as 'an objective story existing outside of the people whose lives it describes' (2006: 9) Having made this suggestion he then goes on to explain that: 'Historical remembrance is a way of interpreting the past which draws on both history and memory, on documented narratives about the past and on the statements of those who lived through them' (ibid). Here we once again see the distinction between history and memory being set out. Post-Halbwachs, however, the problems attached to any attempts to separate 'documented narratives' and 'witness statements' need to be more clearly acknowledged. Such acknowledgment would alert us to questions about the status and origin of 'witness statements' and the fact that

historians do not exist outside of social groups and are prone to the same mythologizing through their selection and presentation of material in the service of the group. Indeed, in Ireland, as elsewhere, the first things most readers of history are inclined to determine are the political allegiances and communal provenance and aspirations of the author. This brings us to the *function* of memory – collective, communicative, or cultural.

The Functions of Memory: Unity, Identity, Power and Immortality

Halbwachs believed that the main function of collective memory was the maintenance of the unity of the collective. In this he followed his mentor Durkheim who argued that the mythology of any group is the system of beliefs common to the group and that there is no essential difference between the ritual commemorating a great national event and a religious ritual. Both serve to sustain these beliefs and also sustain the group's 'sentiment it has of itself and of its unity' (1915: 375).

Burke criticises Halbwachs for being too influenced by Durkheim's emphasis on consensus and cohesion and thus looking for *a* social memory rather than exploring 'memory communities'. This is despite Halbwachs' argument that there were as many collective memories as there were collectives. Nora follows Halbwachs in seeing memory as unifying multiple groups.

> Memory wells up from groups that it welds together, which is to say, as Maurice Halbwachs observed, that there are as many memories as there are groups, that memory is by nature multiple yet specific; collective and plural yet individual(op cit:3).

The claim or perception of a shared memory is certainly used to define 'real' communities. Bellah et al (1985) argue that 'Communities […] have a history – in an important sense they are constituted by their past – and for this reason we can speak of a real community as a "community of memory," one that does not forget its past.' (2011 [1985]:229) They go on to list some of these 'genuine communities' which, in the USA, include 'ethnic and racial' communities, religious communities, and 'the national community defined by its history and by the character of its representative leaders.' (ibid) Such claims alert us to the problematic way in which 'community' is often easily and uncritically mobilised in memory studies. This will be addressed later (below).

Jan Assman believes that memory is always connected to identity. Indeed the needs of identity set limits on the temporal stretch of cultural memory which 'reaches back into the past only so far as the past can be reclaimed as "ours".' (2010: 113) He goes on to reinforce his distinction between knowledge and memory by arguing that the latter is 'knowledge with an identity-index'. (ibid: 114) He argues that remembering 'is a realization of belonging, even a social obligation. One has to remember in order to belong' (ibid). Eviatar Zerubavel likewise states that through 'mnemonic socialisation' (after Williams we could also talk of 'mnemonic acculturation') we learn the 'rules of remembrance' which enables us to maintain membership of a group, or 'mnemonic community'. This 'sociobiographical memory' teaches 'us' 'our' past which often predates our membership of the group.

> Indeed, being social presupposes the ability to experience events that had happened to groups and communities to which we belong long before we joined them as if they were part of our own past […] Such existential fusion of our own personal biography with the history of the groups and communities to which we belong is an indispensable part of our social identity as anthropologists, Mormons, Native Americans, Miami Dolphins fans, or Marines. (2011 [1995]: 224)

This is clearly relevant to Northern Ireland. The case under study is centred on the ways in which 'memory' of events predating the experience of any of the population still loom large in the culture. And these are only just beyond reach. Other examples could have been chosen which precede the Great War by centuries and yet are still very much regarded as part of 'our' past by the peoples of the region.

Zerubavel's 'sociobiographical memory' is similar to, if not necessarily as internalised as, the experience of the past that Marrianne Hirsch describes as 'postmemory' (1992): the sense of the possession of memories of events that occurred to the previous generation because of intense and sustained exposure to 'stories, images and behaviours' when growing up (2011: 347). The 'events' that were her primary focus when coining the term were those of the Holocaust that engulfed the Jews of Europe in the mid-20th century. Peter Novick (2000) also focuses on this traumatic phenomenon and argues that the main function of 'a significant collective memory' is to be the expression of some 'eternal or essential truth' about the collective. This is usually tragic. This memory works to define not only that eternal truth but also an 'eternal identity' for members of the group. (op cit: 4)

For Alan Megill the 'memory craze', identified by many memory scholars as having exploded in the last fifty years, is a result of this connection between memory and identity. For him this expansion of interest in memory coincides with a lack of confidence in identity:

'The common feature underpinning most contemporary manifestations of the memory craze seems to be an insecurity about identity. […] We might postulate a rule: when identity becomes uncertain, memory rises in value.' (2011:194). Megill believes that a weakness of Halbwachs' approach was that he saw memory as the product of an already well-established identity which 'goes about inventing a past congruent with that identity' (ibid:195).

> In contrast, the most characteristic feature of the contemporary scene is a lack of fixity at the level of identity, leading to the project of constructing memory with a view to constructing identity itself. The appropriate model for understanding such a context is less Halbwachs' than Benedict Anderson's. In Anderson's evocative phrase, it is a matter of 'imagined communities'; we might think of imagined communities as imagined identities. Of course every community beyond a very small group is in some strong sense 'imagined'. The more a community is imagined, the more it finds that 'memory' is necessary to it – and so is 'forgetting'. (ibid)

This implies that some communities are 'less imagined' and therefore more 'real'. Indeed Megill identifies particular identities most in need of constitutive 'imagining' – 'an identity that had been brought into visibility by means of self-designation would be all the more likely to need justification of the sort that 'memory' can bring.' (ibid: 194) Once again this implies that other identities are less in need of memory because they have not been brought about by self-designation. Are these identities designated by others or are they, as he seems to be implying, somehow naturally occurring? Seigfreid Schmidt agrees that societies produce their past, through a process of active selectivity, to construct a preferred 'social autobiography' (2010: 197) but he goes on to argue that in order for such an identity to be sustained this process of constant interpretation and narration of the present in relation to a previously narrated past needs to be eternally maintained. (ibid).

Halbwachs, despite Megill's critique, can be seen to address this directly when looking at change in collective memory. He argues that we should not see this as a change in the collective memory of a previously existing group. Rather, we should recognise that this new collective memory was a symptom of the emergence of a new group, a new collective.

> When a given period ceases to interest the subsequent period, the same group has not forgotten a part of its past, because, in reality, there are two successive groups, one following the other. […] The apparent persistence of the same groups merely reflects the persistence of external distinctions resulting from places, names, and the general character of societies. (2011 [1940s]: 143)

In this way he demonstrates his attempts to avoid one kind of reification of 'communities'.

One type of 'collective' clearly relevant to the present study of the function of memory in Northern Ireland is that of the 'nation'. The most obvious function of social memory in Europe in the nineteenth century was as a key element in the widespread project of nation-building (Burke, 1989: 107). Ernst Renan's oft-quoted comments on this explain that the nation needs a shared 'legacy' from the past which then encourages the shared project of perpetuating this 'heritage'. One element of this is the legitimacy that simply existing through time, or even just at some stage in the past, gives to any collective. As Isnenghi observes in relation to the 'Italian' Risorgimento: 'Italy is – or rather will be, will return to being – because it was; it was founded on the memory of having been.' (2010: 27) He goes on to point out that intellectuals were enrolled in the task of producing and presenting the evidence needed for such a claim. Pierre Nora also described this process, extending well into the twentieth century, whereby 'historians, speaking half as soldiers, half as priests, bore the burden of responsibility on behalf of the nation' (op cit: 5) The memories that Renan argued were most effective in committing the nation to ensuring their ongoing existence were those communicating past suffering and sacrifice in the name of the nation. 'Suffering in common unifies more than joy does. Where national memories are concerned, griefs are of more value than triumphs, for they impose duties, and require common effort' (1990 [1882]: 19). The epitome of this shared grief was the deaths of soldiers in war. Thus, for those arguing for the continuance of the British 'national' connection to be maintained in Northern Ireland the key memories to be mobilised are those of the men who died in the service of the nation in war. The suffering of the 36th Division at the Somme is of more weight in this regard than tales of Williamite victory at the Boyne but both work to establish a 'debt' owed by 'the present' to 'the past'.

The concept of sacrifice was, of course, also a central element of the regionally dominant religion of Christianity. The central figure in this religion, Jesus Christ, is portrayed as having willingly offered himself up for crucifixion in order to atone for the sins of mankind and thus enable them to attain eternal life in heaven. Christ was the divine in human form and as such his suffering in the course of this was as real as it would have been for any other human. Thus the dominant interpretation of the sacrifice of the crucifixion was as an act of atonement. In this it partly followed the pattern of most religious sacrifice in that it was an act of propitiation carried out in the hope of appeasing or currying favour with the gods. This would then, hopefully, lead to various beneficial outcomes for the individual or society.

Girard (1977) argued that sacrifice also acted as a means of channelling violence within society. The selection and 'sacrificing' of the 'scapegoat' was a ritual that acted as a safety valve or escape channel that averted violence within society by directing it towards the surrogate victim. Girard saw this as common to most religions. He also argued that this sacrifice formed the basis for all religions and religious rituals and, subsequently, all civic groupings and rites. However, he argues that the scapegoating mechanism works differently in Christianity because the believers state the innocence of the victim and that he was unjustly killed (1993: 30). This denial of the guilt of the victim then supposedly vindicates all victims and leads to a non-violent 'kingdom'.

Dunnill (2013) is critical of Girard's theories describing them as 'imaginative' but not based in empirical historical examples. He also argues that although Girard does recognise 'good' mimetic desire, for example the desire to imitate Christ, he over-emphasises the social role of 'bad' mimetic desire which leads to rivalry, violence and the scapegoating he gives a central role in his theory. Dunnill believes that the normative consequences of mimetic desire that lead to social cohesion are thus under-played in Girard's work.

The perception of sacrifice as being a central element in religion and society, however, is one that has been supported by a variety of writers on the subject. Maurice, writing in the mid-nineteenth century, argued for the centrality of sacrifice in Christianity describing it as '*the* doctrine of the Bible, *the* doctrine of the Gospel. The Bible is, from first to last, setting forth to us the meaning of sacrifice.' (cited in Bradley 1995: 169). In this period sacrifice was also described as a universal law or as Robertson put it 'the grand law of the universe' (ibid: 166). In the wake of Darwin's theories on evolution sacrifice was thus woven into scientific as well as spiritual explanations and Bradley observes that this was increasingly the case amongst British theologians in the latter half of the nineteenth century. This extended to an explanation of human society and morality and, argues Bradley, led to the establishment of the Victorian cults of Christian manliness and Christian socialism. This developed into the concept of Christian citizenship as propounded by Green to his students at Oxford, among them, as an indication of his potential influence, being future Prime Minister Herbert Asquith and architect of the 'Welfare State' William Beveridge.

At this time the type of sacrifice being praised was self-sacrifice and the British perspective on Christ's sacrifice was increasingly one that saw it not as atonement but rather as a joining with God in the act of self-sacrifice (ibid: chapter 6). Bradley argues that Kierkegaard's call 'for a recovery of the principle and practice of martyrdom and freely

chosen sacrifice.' was one that 'was to be repeated and responded to with increasing fervency as the nineteenth century progressed' (ibid: 164). He also observes that the language of sacrifice became increasingly applied to nation and empire and cites General Gordon, before his 'sacrificial' demise at Khartoum stating that 'the thousands who fall in battle are thousands liberated from prison to see the effulgent God' (ibid: 196). Thus can one make sense of the sparse wording on the cenotaph in London – 'The Glorious Dead'. Joined with the Christ God in his self-sacrifice and now liberated and come into the glorious presence of the Lord.

The Great War did test such notions. Bradley argues that the concept of nobly laying one's life down for a cause was the victim of severe disillusionment by 1918 in contrast to its high-water mark in 1914. Yet it still survived and even, in some ways, was renewed through the persistence of the argument that in suffering so much in the hell of the conflict soldiers had followed Christ's example and thus had become closer to him and their resultant place in heaven (ibid: 199). This connection was constructed in various texts including poems such as 'The suffering God' by Geoffrey Studdart Kennedy, better known as 'Woodbine Willie' for the cigarettes he gave to soldiers when he was an Army Chaplain in the war:

> I was crucified at Cambrai, / And again outside Bapaume; / I was scourged for miles along the Albert Road, / I was driven, pierced and bleeding, / With a million maggots feeding / On the body that I carried as my load.'

Marvin and Ingle (2008) also place sacrifice at the heart of their understanding of the nation. Indeed they argue that 'The nation is the shared memory of blood sacrifice, periodically renewed.' (p4) What they describe as the 'sacred labour' of commemorating this blood sacrifice is essential for the maintenance of the nation. They go on to state that 'the nation [is] the memory of the last sacrifice' (p5). The dominance in British national commemoration of the First rather than Second World War, or indeed several later conflicts, suggests that this statement might usefully be qualified but the necessary support of a 'periodic renewal' is convincing.

Memory is also put to use more widely as a political tool. John Bodnar argues that 'public memory' 'emerges from the intersection of official and vernacular cultural expressions'. The former are produced by authorities throughout society with the aim of maintaining social unity, existing institutions and 'loyalty to the status quo'. To this end they 'attempt to advance these concerns by promoting interpretations of past and present reality that reduce the power of competing interests that threaten the attainment of their goals.'

(2011: 265). Erik Meyer also identifies the legitimating of power and policy as being a prime use for memory. He identifies two categories of memory politics. He credits Norbert Frei with coining the term he favours for his first category – 'policy for the past' (*Vergangenheitspolitik*). This refers to policy decisions made, usually over the course of about five years, to deal with, typically, regime change and the 'problems' this throws up. For the government of the new Irish Free State in the 1920s one of these problems was how to commemorate the deaths of citizens who had died in the uniform of the recently dispatched coloniser. The government of the statelet in the north likewise had to decide how to build such remembrance into their new, if not quite so dramatically changed, situation. The concrete policy decisions taken by both polities – resulting in marginalisation and centralisation of the memory respectively – were taken with particular aims in mind in the present and the future. For the Free State government the desire was to minimise any elements of the national past that could not easily be built into the emergent nation's autobiography as a legitimating piece of evidence of pre-existing Irishness. For the regime in Stormont the message was explicitly aimed both internally and externally. The centrality of the symbols and practices of Remembrance was a constant reminder to the Unionist population of their duty to secure the political status of the statelet that had been paid for with the blood of their sons (who became their grandfathers). It also sent a clear internal signal to 'the enemy within' – the nationalist population finding themselves abandoned on the wrong side of the border – that they were also on the wrong side of history. This was loyal territory and would always be so. The external addressee was the Imperial Government in London. The 'sacrifice on the Somme' was a debt paid by the loyal population of Northern Ireland and owed – in reciprocal loyalty – by the Crown. The Union must be maintained.

Meyer's second category he describes as the 'politics of history' (*Geschichtspolitik*) and this accords with Bodnar's description of the aims of the usage of the past – the legitimation of individuals, parties, nations, etc. in the present. This is done by association with or distancing from elements in the past. (Meyer, 2010: 176) Such claims are open to debate and thus the politics of history involves a struggle over the past. Indeed, the Popular Memory Group argued: 'that all political activity is intrinsically a process of historical argument and definition, that all political programmes involve some construction of the past as well as of the future… Political domination involves historical definition.' (2011[1980]: 258)

As Michel Foucault points out, this struggle involving what he terms 'popular memory' is always ongoing:

> Since memory is actually a very important factor in struggle (recall, in fact, struggles develop in a kind of conscious moving forward of history), if one controls people's memory, one controls their dynamism. And one also controls their experience, their knowledge of previous struggles. Just what the Resistance was, must no longer be known…' (2011[1974]: 253)

Thus the discursive practice of politics has memory at its heart. What 'the Somme' was must no longer be known. 'The Somme' becomes a resource to be shaped and mobilised to legitimate a particular political position and to maintain the status quo. Oppositional voices attempting to present their version of this past face the daunting task of unsettling what quickly becomes 'myth' in Barthes' (1972) usage – the depoliticised 'truth' about the past. Whilst Winter may argue that the presence of both pacifists and militarists at the London Cenotaph on Remembrance Sunday shows that 'the contradictions in these forms of expression on the same day and in the same places have never been resolved' (2010: 64) how these contradictions are framed within society is very clear. The dominant narrative of Remembrance is so well established that any oppositional voices struggle to be perceived as making sense. Recent laws banning protests at the site have subsequently led to arrests for the burning of poppies and even the reading out of the names of the dead. Such actions have been publically constructed as unpatriotic, hostile and illegal. And there are no visible signs of pacifism at Remembrance rituals at the Belfast Cenotaph.

As Meyer identified (above) one of the key uses that the past is put to concerns change. Berger argues that we constantly revise our past to fit our present 'very much as the Stalinists kept rewriting the Soviet Encyclopedia' (1963: 71) but that such revision, normally carried out in a fairly haphazard manner, becomes much more deliberate and integrated at moments of major change such as conversion to a new religion or political ideology. The Free State in the 1920s had undergone such a profound conversion and the population's integral involvement in the British imperial project was a part of the past that was subject to revision. In the North the Unionists clung on and could be argued to have attempted to deny that change had occurred. The anthropologist Claude Levi-Strauss observed that all societies experience change but that some 'want to deny it and try, with a dexterity we underestimate, to make the states of their development which they consider 'prior' as permanent as possible'. (2011: 173). Observers of the continued foregrounding of imperial symbols and dogged continuation of 'traditional' displays of loyalty to the Crown in Northern Ireland could interpret this as exemplifying Strauss's theory.

Halbwachs likewise stresses that collective memory is primarily interested in similarities, resemblances and presents even changes and dissimilarities, if at all possible, as similarities that confirm the unchanging characteristics and position of the group (2011: 147). Such practices can enable us to cope with change but they can also suppress and resist change. Nietzsche railed against what he identified as 'antiquarian history' which develops an obsessive interest and respect for the past until 'man is encased in the stench of must and mould' (2011: 76). Creativity and an orientation toward the future are stifled by this: 'the past has to be forgotten if it is not to become the gravedigger of the present' (ibid: 73). Perhaps the obverse of this is the strategy described by Karl Marx whereby limited, insignificant, change is presented as revolutionary by clothing it in the guise of former 'heroic' times, people and events. This use of the past not only hides such change's limited scope and encourages the population to be passionate about such limited aims but also shapes the 'new' in the style of the old. Radical change is thus deferred. (1976[1852]: 1) Just such criticisms were levelled at the Free State government by their former comrades who were determined to keep fighting. The same logic informs current 'dissident republican' denouncements of the political strategy and, what they see as, the military capitulation of Sinn Fein-led republicanism.

The understandable focus of many writers in the field on the role of memory in politics has led, for some critics, to a situation where all addressal of memory tends to be reduced to what Alon Confino concisely describes as 'who wants whom to remember what and why' (2011: 198). He argues that this ignores the social and cultural aspects of memory. He does not pretend that these are not also political but encourages us to explore the connections between these categories and, at the same time, make wider use of the concept of memory: 'the history of memory must be more rigorous theoretically in articulating the relationship between the social, the political, and the cultural and, at the same time, more anarchical and comprehensive in using the term memory as an explanatory device that links representation and social experience.' (ibid: 199)

Barry Schwartz (2011) also criticises those, such as Bodnar, whom he believes see memory as solely tied to politics. He agrees that such analyses can highlight the ways in which the past is changed in the present to serve the goals of the powerful but argues that collective memory is a cultural system and as well as being open to such change is also characterised by continuity, particularly in the area of values.

The past is matched to the present as a model *of* society and a model *for* society. As a model *of* society, collective memory reflects past events in terms of the needs, interests, fears and aspirations of the present. As a model *for* society, collective memory performs two functions: it embodies a *template* that organizes and animates behaviour and a *frame* within which people locate and find meaning for their present experience. Collective memory affects social reality by *reflecting*, *shaping*, and *framing* it. (p245) (his emphasis).

Such a definition could be applied to 'culture' itself! But Cultural Studies scholars would ask where power resided in this model. The 'reflection' of the past for the needs of 'the present' elides questions of agency and interest. If 'social reality' is being shaped and framed who is performing these operations? Who wants whom to remember what and why?!

Whilst such critiques can be levelled at these positions their highlighting of the extrapolitical does usefully encourage us to explore other functions of memory. Doing so quickly brings us to the blindingly obvious: much of memory is focused on loss. This is, of course, particularly relevant to the role of memory in Remembrance of the Great War but this role will have changed dramatically since 1914. Winter (2010) conveys stories of the experiences of those attending the first commemorations of Armistice Day. For them, he explains, the two-minutes silence was a time when people thought of those men they had known who had been killed in the war rather than of victory, the nation, or any other more abstract sentiment. The silence was a moment for meditation about absence (p64). Winter also argues that memorials to the dead of the Great War and the commemorative practices that involve them performed the materialising of the lost in the solidity of the memorial thus enabling the separation of the dead from the living. This mourning worked to prevent grief from resulting in crippling melancholia. It did so by enabling forgetting. (1996: 19) Emilie Pine, writing on the Irish context of memory, argues that the practices of remembrance – or 'remembrance culture' as she terms it – creates a boundary between the past and the present. This boundary functions to prevent 'the traumas of the past from seeping into the present' (2011: 11). This can only happen once trauma 'recedes into memory'. Whilst this uses a similar persuasive logic to Winter's I would argue that this is not the case with Great War commemoration in Belfast as the events of the past are made use of to give meaning to events of the present. In the case of Remembrance in Belfast this is quite literal. The present events e.g. deaths in Afghanistan are also being remembered at the same time as those of the past. The trauma, for those bereaved, may well have not receded into memory. Yet already the discourse of Remembrance is at work to shape the meaning of that loss.

Whilst the memories at work in Remembrance are most obviously about the loss of soldiers in war they can also be seen as addressing the whole populations' experiences of loss and also their awareness of their own mortality. At the same time they enable us to cope with such awareness through the work they do in terms of identity and epic narrative. Anthony Smith, developing the perception of collective memory as a key element in communal identity and unity, argues that: 'by linking oneself to a 'community of history and destiny', the individual hopes to achieve a measure of immortality which will preserve his or her person and achievements from oblivion; they will live on and bear fruit in the community.' (1991a: 175). Our experience of epic narratives such as those that shape Remembrance enables us, believes Walter Benjamin, to place loss and the passing of time into a larger context; become aware that this is the universal and eternal condition; come to see our own mortality, therefore, as part of the natural rhythm of life; and thus 'make peace with the power of death' (2011: 102).

Another potential function of memory, which links with the functions of healing, communal unity and identity, and which is very much at the heart of contemporary political interest in Remembrance in Northern Ireland, is reconciliation. As Pine observes: 'If the memories of the Great War were sacrificed in the interests of a coherent and congruous history of the emergence of the Irish State, then in the context of the Peace Process, when Irish remembrance culture has sought to come to terms with its recent fraught history, those memories have become politically – and culturally – central.' (2011: 148). As Pine implies, the potential for such memory to work towards, for example, the construction of a new 'coherent state' on the island of Ireland lies in the ability of collective memory to produce both unity and identity for social groups. Much work will need to be done on memories before such an outcome might be possible and an important element of that work will be 'forgetting'. Paul Ricoeur, in exploring the workings of memory, identified various modes of forgetting. Amongst those which he described as 'active forgetting' was 'forgiveness'. Engaging with memory in the right way has the potential to be liberating (2011: 480)

Exploring the ways in which scholars in the field of Memory Studies have theorised the *processes* by which memory functions and attempting to gauge the impact on these processes of contemporary cultural changes should enable us to gain a clearer understanding of how such engagement might be achieved. It will also enable the further testing of the usefulness of the various theories addressed above. This will be the task of the chapter 6 which will look in more detail, and using a range of examples drawn from the

case under study, at what Paul Fussell, the theorist of the cultural impact of memory of the Great War, described as 'the art of memory'(2000[1975]: 32). It will also, subsequently, set out the conceptual tools that I believe will prove useful in examining particular cases where memory can be seen to be being put to work on the streets of Belfast.

Chapter 4   **Contextualising and Theorising Remembrance in Ireland: 1914-1968**

Introduction

As noted in earlier chapters, Pierre Nora (1996a: xxiv) argues for a new kind of history which should focus more on effects than on causes and on the re-use of history rather than on 'what actually happened'. In his work, however, Nora assumes knowledge in the reader of both the French Revolution and the First World War. Such contextualising knowledge enables a fuller understanding of how symbols of memory come to be produced and how their meaning develops and is transformed through usage over time and across space. Similarly, if we are to understand the debate around Remembrance of the 'Great War' in Ireland it helps to know something of the history of the ways in which the war impacted upon the Irish population and the political structures and sympathies on the island and beyond. Knowledge of – the historical context in Ireland into which the war intervened; the reaction of the different political groupings to this; the experience of the Irish during the war; the political upheavals both during and immediately after the war; the context in which Remembrance rituals and texts were developed in both polities on the island; and the ways in which the events of the Troubles influenced such practices – provides an understanding of and illustration of the journey of the significance of Remembrance on the island. Knowledge and understanding of the politics and culture of the place is also necessary on the part of the author if one hopes to produce meanings from a reading of the texts and rituals of Remembrance in Ireland that would be at least partially recognisable by the Irish population i.e. demonstrating an adequate knowledge of the local meanings of various texts and practices. It is thus the aim of this chapter to both explore the relationship between the signifying practice of Remembrance and the discursive construction of the nation and also, through the use of relevant examples, provide the reader with some understanding of the 'Irish' context for this relationship.

My caution in the limiting use of the term 'Irish' here is due not only to the eternal fear of slipping into taking a reified view of the 'Irish' nation as a naturally occurring entity but also because of the necessity to look outside of 'Ireland' in order to discover and understand much of the contextualising information and argument. In the process of analysing the 'politics and culture of the place' one needs to look outside of that place. In our case we need, in particular, to first look at the relationship between Ireland and Great Britain and in

particular between the 'Irish' and the 'English'. Before examining the 'Irish' experience of Remembrance we shall, therefore, start by examining the meanings of Remembrance in Great Britain. For it is in relation to these that the texts and practices of Remembrance in Ireland become particularly significant and thus produce a particular meaning. After exploring the connection between the Irish and British context of Remembrance we will examine the case of Northern Ireland. Here, where many of the inhabitants proclaim either their Britishness or Irishness, the meaning of Remembrance is constructed in relation to both 'the South' and 'the mainland'.

Remembrance in Britain

The signifying practice of Remembrance in Britain – the many and various ways in which people come into contact with signifiers that 'bring it to mind' and the work of meaning making that all aspects of this process involve – is a key site for the construction, maintenance and shaping of the nation.

Remembrance, in Britain, commemorates the dead of both world wars and subsequent conflicts. In particular it focuses on those who lost their lives whilst in the British services and particularly the armed forces. By far the most important day of the year for such commemoration is Remembrance Sunday, the second Sunday of November. It is a post-WW2 adaptation and continuation of Armistice Day, which was commemorated between the world wars on the anniversary of the ending, on the 11th of November 1918, of the First World War or The Great War as it became known in Britain. Recent years have, in fact, seen a revival of some of these commemorative practices on the 11th. Other days, such as the anniversary of the first day of the Battle of the Somme on the 1st of July 1916, commemorating the British Army's greatest loss of life in a single day, are also the occasion for Remembrance ceremonies, this particular example being of great importance in Northern Ireland. Further afield another disaster – the Gallipoli campaign of 1915 – is a key myth in the national story of both Australia and New Zealand whose troops, combined as the ANZACs, are commemorated in Remembrance ceremonies on the 25th of April.

Whilst recognising that Remembrance ceremonies in Britain have been the site of some protest over the years, by, for example, anti-militarists and unemployed ex-soldiers in the inter-war years (see e.g. Connelly 2002:147) and, more recently, Muslim groups protesting against British involvement in the invasion and occupation of Afghanistan, it is safe to say

that Remembrance is a practice that appears to attract widespread support from most of the British population. The main Remembrance Sunday ceremony at the Cenotaph in the heart of London is attended by thousands and broadcast live by the national broadcaster, the BBC. Throughout the rest of the country smaller gatherings assemble to observe the laying of poppy wreaths at the thousands of war memorials in cities, towns and villages. Even more ubiquitous are the artificial poppies pinned to the lapels of a large number of the population and almost everyone appearing on the BBC and some other national television channels in the month leading up to the day.   These artificial flowers symbolising the torn earth of the Western Front in which poppies thrived are sold by the Royal British Legion, a charity supporting ex-service personnel and their families. In 2012 their 'Poppy Appeal' raised over £42 million in this way. (www.britishlegion.org)

All of this, and the Cenotaph ceremony on Remembrance Sunday in particular, is organised, framed and mediated in such a way, particularly by the BBC, that it constructs, renews and celebrates the nation. No other annually occurring event in Britain does this to anywhere near the same extent. National Saints' Days appear on the annual calendars of the countries that make up Great Britain but their celebration is far from universal even within their particular territory (Elgenius, 2005). England's St George's Day, in particular, passes by barely noticed despite attempts, often linked to the marketing of beer and right-wing political groups, to promote it. And besides, these are 'national' days that are associated with only one part of the United Kingdom. This is an illustration of one of the fundamental problems with conceptualising the UK, or even the smaller entity known as Great Britain, as a nation. Both are 'multinational' constructions brought about by the combination of a group of 'nations'. Great Britain comprises England, Wales and Scotland whilst the United Kingdom is constructed by the union of Great Britain and Northern Ireland. There is, therefore, no other day that hails all 'Britons' and calls them to a sacred communion. Remembrance Sunday functions as *the* British National Day (Poulter, 2009a).

Memory and the Nation in Remembrance

An analysis of the national broadcaster's construction and presentation of the main events of the day will serve to illustrate the ways in which it works to produce the nation. It will also present the argument for seeing 'memory work' as central to the success of this production.   The BBC broadcast the Remembrance Sunday commemoration live from

Whitehall in central London. The programme lasts about two hours and is shown on the broadcaster's main channel – BBC1. Whilst the main focus is on events at 'the Cenotaph' in London the programme also includes outside broadcasts of other ceremonies taking place in other parts of the UK and, indeed, the world. It also includes pre-edited sections that provide contextualising information that construct a narrative for the viewer to accept. I have been recording and analysing these programmes annually since 2005 and occasionally before that. They tend to follow an established format.

The programme opens at the Cenotaph where it surveys the assembled crowds of mainly relatively elderly veterans wrapped up against the late-Autumn chill, waiting for the Queen, and listening to the subdued playing of the massed military bands. A solemn narrator, currently one of the most respected 'voices' of the BBC – David Dimbleby, welcomes viewers and introduces and describes the event. At some point in this description, once we have taken in the scene, his voice will drop and the camera will rise before fading into an insert about the First World War. The camera will pan across the empty, ordered silence of a Commonwealth War Cemetery in Flanders which will then become populated by a transition to contemporary footage of soldiers 'going over the top'. These wraiths rise and fall again. Not always the same footage but always the same outcome. The narrator will remind us of the incredible losses suffered by British forces in the war as the past bleeds into the present and the band's playing of the plaintive *Flowers of the Forest* brings us back to the now enhanced and emotionally charged moment of waiting by the massed ranks in London. After another sweep of the crowd we will cut away again to the story of an intrepid action in the Second World War where, despite suffering heavy losses, the British forces achieved their significant objective. Interviews with participants, tough young commandoes grown frail and scared, personalise the action film of the event we have just seen and slightly distinguish it from all the others we have watched on perpetual loop on wet weekend afternoons. The theme of personalisation goes even deeper as we are taken into the comfortable bleakness of a suburban living room to hear from the parents of a young soldier who has recently died in Afghanistan. He was doing what he loved. He felt he was making a difference. The producers tend not to choose as exemplars any of the increasing number of soldiers killed by the Afghan Army recruits they are training. As we return to Whitehall the camera picks out rheumy eyes in the crowd as the music changes to the quintessential Remembrance soundtrack of Elgar's *Nimrod*. If any of us were not sure why we were watching at the start of the programme we certainly are now. The commemoration has been made meaningful to us and the story told through the film-

makers' use of metaphor, metonymy and intertextuality. We are now conscious witnesses to the commemoration of the loss of lives of those who endured and sacrificed in the name of 'the nation'. The next act will be a presentation of what that nation is.

Emerging from one of the buildings that flank the Cenotaph comes a slow procession that works its way around the monument; peeling off to form a cordon on three sides of it. It is led by the Church of England's Bishop of London preceded by altar boys. This announces the religious nature and credentials of the ceremony. They are followed by the Prime Minister and the leaders of all the main political parties who line up alongside each other. Behind them are all past Prime Ministers creating a metonymic link to the past. To their right is an ecumenical smorgasbord of religious leaders representing the ever-growing range of religious beliefs with a significant number of adherents in the UK. On the opposite side of the monument, and afforded more space than the civilians, are the heads of the three main branches of the British forces – Navy, Army and Air Force. Nearby stand representatives of the Merchant Navy, Fire Service, Police Service and, somewhat incongruously, London Underground. Also on this side stands the Bishop and his attendants. The third side of the cordon is a double line of ambassadors, High Commissioners and Legates representing the many countries of the old British Empire, or Commonwealth as this connected group of nations is now called. They are not long kept waiting before the Royal party proceeds into their place to close the square.

Here now, arrayed in front of the viewer is a manifestation of national unity. No differences of politics and religion seem important. All animosities, no matter how fresh or mouldering, are put to one side. The Bishop intones some holy words. The Queen, standing alone, representing all these, representing all of us, performs the loneliness of the sovereign. She is the first to lay a wreath at the foot of the monument followed by her husband and then her son and heir. Both are resplendent in military dress uniforms. They are watched by the other members of the 'first family' from a nearby balcony. The politicians now lay their wreaths, all of poppies, and try to ensure that they look electably sombre and respectful. They are followed by the rest of those lined up. It is a choreographed series of short strides, military nods, careful placement, a step back and a solemn bowing of the head. It is a performance of solemnity, of respect and of remembrance. It is also a performance of the nation. The family of the nation is represented by the royal family. The range of representatives enables all citizens to feel some attachment with the proceedings. And, at

this moment where the dichotomy of 'past' and 'present' is weakened, the wider family of the 'Empire' reappears in the heart of the imperial capital.

Another layer in this construction of the nation is the use of live broadcasts from other locations around the nation. Typically these will be in places of great scenic beauty – such as the banks of a Highland loch – whose rural backdrop will prevent the event from being too urban in setting. They will also typically be in Scotland or Wales. The cameras will focus on the carved figure of a soldier of the Great War head bowed towards the list of names below him. There will be less focus on the smaller crowd here. We are part of that crowd. The programme will switch to these locations both before and after the central action of commemoration in London. This ties together the rural and the urban, the metropolitan and the provincial. The nation together.

The most vital act occurs just before the Queen sets off the wreath-laying. At precisely 11.00 Big Ben chimes the hour and the assembled crowds fall completely silent. The two-minute silence echoes around the buildings of the city and, simultaneously, across the waters of the loch. This is the very moment of Anderson's 'communion' made possible by the development and use of the technologies of live radio and then television. It is that shared moment in time in which we are aware of partaking in an act alongside the rest of the nation. In that moment we both bring the nation into life and become a part of it. It is an annual renewal of this 'imagined community'.

The last act of the ceremony at Whitehall is the slow march past of the thousands of veterans and others who lay wreaths as they reach the Cenotaph. The cameras pick out the extremely elderly and frail, the limbless, the blind, all doggedly 'doing their duty' by their 'fallen' comrades.

The main evening BBC television news on BBC1 carries an extended report on the morning's events which pointedly includes brief clips from Edinburgh, Cardiff and Belfast. The regional BBC news also reports on the ceremony in one of its major cities. These local commemorations are on a necessarily smaller scale compared to the national event but muster what gravitas and authority they can with the presence of military representatives and band, local politicians and religious leaders and the be-robed Lord Mayor in his 'chains' of office.

The live broadcast is, therefore, far from the only Remembrance text produced by carefully planned practices of the national broadcasters. Every region will show a compilation of

events wherein the national commemoration is tied in with the local. A rash of documentaries are also screened over the Remembrance weekend offering a reminder, reappraisal or new angle on, most commonly, the Great War. And every year on the eve of Remembrance Sunday a programme of extended highlights of the 'Festival of Remembrance' in the Royal Albert Hall is screened.

The BBC signals the approach of the Remembrance weekend by dressing all its presenters with poppies on their lapels for the previous three weeks. Every presenter, reporter, and even interviewee complies with this request. Other national broadcasters such as ITV tend to follow suit as do many other high profile figures. Professional footballers in the English Premier League, for instance have started to wear specially designed shirts for that weekend's matches featuring a poppy and the managers wear them when facing the cameras for the essential debrief after the game. This in a league that contains a high proportion of players and managers from outside of the UK. The judges on the Saturday night talent shows such as *X Factor* display poppies on their outfits as do many of the acts they are assessing. Newspapers add poppies to their mastheads in the days leading up to Remembrance Sunday and carry detailed coverage of both the London ceremony and related stories.

The ubiquity of the poppy, the central symbol of Remembrance, in the media normalises, naturalises and de-politicises the phenomena. We are very much in the presence of Barthes' 'myth'. One way of understanding Remembrance has become so taken-for-granted that it obscures all other possible connotations. That Remembrance is widely supported is inescapable. The meaning created in this moment for story-telling, for discursive construction, is narrated to us in numerous ways and most clearly in the national broadcaster's coverage.

The BBC's presentation of Remembrance works to discursively construct the nation in the minds of its audience. It does this through giving a far wider audience to the central ritual in London. It not only presents this tableau but also narrates it. In doing so it encourages a particular reading of 'national unity'. Its outside broadcasts re-emphasise this on a UK-wide scale. But it does not just enable that imagining of a national 'communion' that Anderson believed so important in making possible a sense of belonging to that nation. It also works to produce memory. This memory is collective in Halbwachs' sense but it is also specifically 'national'. 'Ownership' of such a shared memory not only encourages the viewer/participant to make sense of past and, importantly, current loss of life in far-flung

conflicts in terms of 'sacrifice in the cause of the nation' – and thus once again stifle any political critique of 'our' engagement in war (Bushaway, 1992: 161 re this function of Remembrance in 1920s) – it also enables that awareness of and engagement with the past that is deemed to be so important in the continued maintenance of the discourse of the nation. As Hobsbawm (1996:255) points out, the past is an essential ingredient in the making of any nation. A presentation of a past in which 'we' have struggled for survival against 'the enemy' is particularly constructive. And the specific focus that Remembrance has on the 'nation's' World War dead shapes a memory capable of feeding that sense of shared suffering that Renan identified as being such a necessary and powerful part of the ingredients of any claim to nationhood. In this way memory works to forge a bond of duty between the nation and the 'participants' in Remembrance. The fact that, with the passing of time since a war involving a huge citizens army, most of the population would not have directly suffered or sacrificed does not undermine this argument. If anything, it could be argued that such a lack of sacrifice produces an even greater sense of debt and a consequently stronger sense of obligation and loyalty to 'the nation' in 'descendant' generations than in those that 'gave their sons'.

For that first generation there was no clear precedent which could serve as a template for the development of commemorative texts and practices. The First World War was a first in a number of ways, two of which are particularly significant for an understanding of the form that Remembrance was to take in Britain. It was the first war for which Britain brought in conscription, forcing millions of ordinary citizens to enlist in the armed forces. It was also the first war that Britain had fought in in which 'her' enemies were also equipped with the same arsenal of devastatingly lethal weapons made possible by mechanised industrial processes – hence its sometime description as the first industrialised war. The combination of these two factors, along with a tactical approach widely perceived (e.g. from Taylor, 1966, to Ferguson, 1998) as failing to adequately account for weapons development, led to a huge number of casualties across all sections of society. This was acknowledged in commemoration.

For the first time many monuments appeared with the names of ordinary soldiers recorded. In previous conflicts it had only been the officers whose families and friends had had the wealth to commission memorials to their loved ones. The professional foot soldiers and sailors of the British Army and Royal Navy, mainly drawn from an underclass of the poor and the criminal had rarely been commemorated in death. The deaths of so many

respectable citizens were never likely to have been treated in the same way. Parish councils, town and city borough councils, large employers, churches and schools all raised money to erect memorials to their dead. Early on in the war the government had made the decision not to repatriate the bodies of the dead and at its end the work of constructing cemeteries across Flanders and elsewhere was given to the newly created Imperial War Graves Commission. The relative uniformity of the headstones is the result of a deliberate decision by the government to ban any other style of marker within the graveyards. There is no distinction made, other than the details of the inscription, between the grave of a private and that of an officer. From the dead in the war graves of the Western Front is Anderson's 'deep horizontal comradeship' of the nation most literally constructed.

Most official memorials, such as Lutyens' massive monument to the missing of the Somme at Thiepval, likewise present the names of the dead in alphabetical rather than rank order. The repatriation of the dead was achieved symbolically, and thus economically, with the return of the body of an anonymous soldier and its reburial in the pre-eminent cathedral of the official state religion – the Church of England's Westminster Abbey. *The Unknown Warrior* could be anyone's dead loved one – private or officer, Scots, Welsh, Irish or English (at the very least). And the central monument to the war in the heart of the capital was not a general astride a stallion, nor an emperor or mythic figure of Victory but a plain and sombre cenotaph – an empty tomb.

Whilst there was a Victory Parade in the summer of 1919 the dominant mood was one of widespread mourning (Winter, 2010: 64) and it was this aspect of commemoration that came to shape Remembrance. It was, however, mourning the loss of those whose cause had, eventually, been triumphant. Clearly, those gathering on *Volkstrauertag* (The People's Day of Mourning) in Germany could not comfort themselves with having achieved such an outcome. The situation in Ireland was different again from both these extremes.

Remembrance and the construction of 'Ireland'

The texts and practices of Remembrance that were constructed in the immediate post-war period on the island of Ireland emerged into and were moulded by a society that had undergone considerable changes since 1914. Some of these changes were common to all parts of the UK and included an expansion of the democratic franchise. But whilst this expansion of the vote led to the strengthening of the Labour Party in the rest of the UK in

Ireland the main beneficiary was the party of radical nationalism – Sinn Fein. Ireland was hardly alone in Europe, and beyond, in experiencing an upsurge of nationalism towards the end of the First World War. Empires – Russian, Austro-Hungarian, Ottoman – were collapsing and their constituent territories were being reorganised into sovereign nation states such as Latvia, Lithuania, Estonia, Czechoslovakia, Hungary, Finland and what became Yugoslavia. The Treaty of Versailles, after the war, was the venue for the legitimation of 'the rights of small nations' thus tying off neatly a narrative within the British Empire that had presented the defence of 'little Belgium', rather than the culmination of a complex imperial power struggle, as the reason for the widespread conflict. The 'Irish' struggle to break free of the British Empire and become a sovereign nation is at the heart of the different context within which 'Irish' Remembrance developed.

In the first few years after the war, when the traditions of Remembrance in Britain were being established, Ireland was a land in turmoil. The insurrection by radical Republicans (wanting an Ireland free from any control by the British Crown and Empire) in Dublin in April of 1916 had attracted little support from the population but in its aftermath and over the next two years attitudes changed. In the UK (at that time the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland) General Election of December 1918 the republican Sinn Féin party virtually wiped out the previously dominant constitutional nationalists – for whom Irish 'Home Rule' within the Empire had always been the goal. The republicans refused to go to Westminster and declared an Irish parliament, Dáil Éireann, in Dublin. The voting in the six counties in the north-east of the island, however, confirmed that a large majority of the population there supported the maintenance of the Union with Great Britain with 75% of the seats being taken by Unionists of one shade or another. (Farrell, 1976: 21)

For the next two years a guerrilla war was waged between the Irish Republican Army (IRA) and the forces of the Crown until a treaty was signed granting twenty six of the Irish counties, dubbed the 'Irish Free State', dominion status within the Empire. This meant they had control of most of their own affairs at home and abroad including their own armed forces but were subject to an oath of loyalty to the King. The remaining six counties in the north-east of the island were accepted as being a separate jurisdiction – 'Northern Ireland' – within the 'United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland'. This fell a long way short of the demands of the Republicans and the complexion of the 'Irish Republic' as proclaimed by the rebels in Dublin in 1916. For them the entire island of Ireland had to be united as a republic free from any British control. The fighting then took on an even more

localized nature as the Pro and Anti Treaty factions *within* the Free State fought a bitter civil war until the Pro Treaty forces' victory in the summer of 1923.

This complex conflict saw the construction of a range of factions on the island – the Unionists in the 'North' and the Unionists in the 'South'; the constitutional nationalists, Pro-Treaty 'Republicans' and Anti-Treaty Republicans in both polities; and the forces of the British Crown across the island and beyond – all of whom had differing perceptions of the ideal status of 'Ireland' in terms of nationality. Each of these made use of the texts and practices of Remembrance as a part of the attempted construction, maintenance and defence of their perceived 'national identity' and their preferred political form for 'their' 'home'.

The Anglo-Irish War, or War of Independence, of 1919-21 is also sometimes called 'The Tan War' after the 'Black and Tans', the demobilized soldiers recruited mainly from Britain as temporary policemen to combat the IRA. The British Establishment that unleashed this notoriously brutal force on the Irish population were attempting to regain the state of affairs that had previously existed whereby Ireland was not only a part of the Empire but also of the United Kingdom itself. It was 'home' because it was 'theirs'. Public displays of the right sort of patriotic Remembrance were demanded of the 'sullen' Irish. Businesses were warned by the 'Tans' and their colleagues the Auxiliaries, also ex-soldiers but typically ex-officers, that if they didn't close 'out of respect' on Armistice Day then their premises would be destroyed. (Dungan 1997: 41) Indeed the only footage of the day featured in the edited collection of newsreel and other contemporary documentary film released under the title *Saoirse?* (Freedom?) in 1961, and thus both shaping the existing collective memory (Halbwachs, 1992) and also enabling the construction of a 'post-memory' (Hirsch, 1992) of the situation, shows a Union Jack attached to the clothes of two young men who were then forced, by the British military, to march through the town of Dungarvon and raise the flag over the nearby Abbeyside Castle. Dungan argues that such actions led Armistice Day to be linked to suppression of the IRA campaign against the British, therefore reinforcing the labeling of Irish ex-servicemen as somehow 'anti-Irish' and 'consign[ing] most of them to silence and anonymity'. (op cit)

Indeed the Irishmen returning from serving in the British Army into the context of the Anglo-Irish War were considered by many of the population to be at best foolish, probably suspect and possibly traitorous. More than 120 ex-soldiers, having survived the Western Front or Gallipoli, and made it back to their homes in Ireland, were shot dead on their

doorsteps by the IRA for their actual or suspected collusion with the Crown forces (Leonard, 1997: 63).

'Southern' Unionists also made attempts to promote the conceptualisation of Ireland as an integral part of the Empire and used the opportunities afforded by moments of Remembrance to do so. In November 1919, on the occasion of the first anniversary of the armistice, and after the IRA had moved on from ambushing policemen to attacking the British Army (Cottrell, 2006: 47), students of Trinity College Dublin, a long-time seat of 'Anglo-Irish' Ascendancy power and privilege in the heart of the 'Second City of the Empire', and one of only two constituencies in the 26 counties to elect Unionists in the 1918 General Election, spilled out onto the streets to stop traffic and enforce the two minutes silence. Afterwards amidst waving Union Jacks they sang 'God save the King!' University College Dublin students replied with 'The Soldier's Song', eventually to be adopted as the Irish national anthem. A scene of 'wild disorder' ensued. Thus was the form set for what were to become annual disturbances which, in 1925, included the throwing of firebombs. (Leonard, 1996: 101-2; Jeffery, 2000: 115)

For Unionists in the 'South' it thus became an important opportunity to perform their 'Britishness'. Republicans exploited this flag waving to demonstrate their true 'Irishness' by their antipathy to such British symbolism (Burke, 2004; Jeffery, 2000). After losing the civil war the Anti-Treaty Republicans used the occasion of Remembrance ceremonies to contrast their patriotic republican ardour with that of their erstwhile colleagues now sitting in government and seemingly comfortable with such imperial displays. This supported their argument that the uprising had never been completed. The British hadn't gone away.

For their part their ex-Republican comrades who had supported the Treaty, and thus the compromise over territory and sovereignty, and now comprised the Irish government, having agreed to remain part of the British Empire, could hardly object to the imperial displays at Remembrance ceremonies. Besides, large numbers of most sections of the population, including members of the government, had a personal stake in remembrance of the War dead. At the first truly peace time commemoration in Dublin in 1923 thousands of people attended a ceremony. The following year an estimated crowd of 50,000 people watched a parade of 20,000 ex-servicemen and almost half a million poppies are reported to have been sold in the Dublin area alone (Leonard, 1996: 102). It is unsurprising therefore that government ministers attended ceremonies and laid wreaths.

Moves *were* taken by the government of the emerging state, however, that demonstrate their awareness of the symbolic power of such events to shape the discursive construction of the nation. Dublin's Remembrance ceremony was moved, on police advice, from College Green just outside Trinity College in the heart of the capital, to Phoenix Park on the outskirts. And when a trust set up to establish a national monument to the dead of the Great War tried, in 1924, to purchase Merrion Square Gardens opposite the Dáil the plan met with opposition. Eventually, in March 1927, the purchase was blocked after a debate in the Dáil during which Kevin O'Higgins, whose own brother had died fighting in the Great War, succinctly explained the government's reasoning:

> No one denies the sacrifice, and no one denies the patriotic motives which induced the vast majority of those men to join the British Army to take part in the Great War, and yet it is not on *their* sacrifice that this State is based and I have no desire to see it suggested it is (cited in Jeffery, 2000: 114, his emphasis).

He went on to echo the words of General William Hickie from the previous year when he deprecated 'profoundly the mentality of either side that would like to make of the 11th November a Twelfth of July'. (ibid) (Of which, more later).

Eventually a plot was bought at Islandbridge out past Phoenix Park. Whilst this is not much further from the city centre than the park this move took it out of the regular view of the population for whom the park was and still is a popular venue for leisure purposes. The proposed bridge across the River Liffey that would have linked the two and thus inserted the memorial into the leisure time experience of many of the population of the capital was never built. The government also declined to sanction the memorial with a ministerial attendance at an Armistice Day ceremony. The day was, in such ways, removed to the margins.

As O'Higgins explanation makes clear, this marginalisation of Remembrance in the 'Free State' was part of a policy by the Irish government aimed at the creation of an Ireland that was clearly distinct from Britain. In this it was following the example of the cultural nationalists of the late 19th and early 20th centuries who had worked hard to construct an 'Irish' culture in opposition to the increasing dominance and ubiquity of aspects of 'English' culture. As Amilcar Cabral (1973) argued, in another (post)colonial setting where the colonisers had had centuries to influence the culture and self-perception of the populace, it is essential to any anti-colonial liberation struggle that the 'indigenous' culture be

promoted. This was done in Ireland in a variety of areas. The Gaelic Athletic Association (GAA) promoted the sports of hurling, Gaelic football and camogie as an alternative to the increasingly popular Association Football and the long established sports of rugby and cricket. The Gaelic League worked to promote the learning of the native language in the face of the dominance of English across much of the island and most especially in its urban centres. This spread of English was partly a direct result of the application of power – the teaching of Irish had at one time been banned – but the reactive move to promote it can, informed by Foucault's thinking on power, also be seen as being produced by that same use of power.

The writers at the heart of the Irish literary revival of the late 19th century pragmatically did not attempt to restrict their output to Gaelic. They mobilised the English language in their project to publicise and make accessible the folklore, legends and literature of the island. Yeats was typical in his emphasis on content rather than form when setting out what he saw as the priorities of the movement:

> When we remember the majesty of Cuchullin and the beauty of sorrowing Deirdre
> we should not forget that it is that majesty and that beauty which is immortal, and
> not the perishing tongue that first told them. (cited in Skene, 1974: 18)

Yeats was influential in encouraging the production of visual representations of this majesty and beauty in his championing of Oliver Sheppard's sculptural works which materialised the heroic figures of Irish myth and legend. Celtic design and decoration was also celebrated and utilised in many of the literary texts produced at the time and subsequently (for a fuller analysis of this process see Poulter, 2009b) All of this worked not only to construct a supposedly 'authentic Irish' culture but also to differentiate 'Irishness' from 'Englishness' or 'Britishness'. More than this, it also enabled the differentiation between 'Irish' and 'English' – the 'us' and 'them' of the coming uprising. As Saussure points out, meaning is produced relationally. Irish meant not English. And as Derrida (1982: 195) pointed out, these binary oppositions were also hierarchical. Differences that were made significant were not only creating meanings in terms of neutral categorisations but also in terms of value judgements. Irish was not only different to but also superior to English. Attempting to construct such a discourse of national identity was going to require much work after centuries of domination that had supported the dissemination of the opposite view.

In the early years of the semi-independent state there still remained work to be done in terms of constructing the distinction between the Irish and their imperious neighbours and thus bolstering sovereignty claims based on the logic of difference. This work included the raising of the stature of the Irish patriot in relation to his or her English adversary. O'Higgins and his colleagues were aware of the powerful role that veneration of the nation's dead played in the construction and maintenance of the authority and validity of the idea of the nation. They were also aware of the intertextual meaning that would be produced by the close positioning of the site of the new parliament and a monument to those who had died whilst serving in the British Army. Its placing at the margins of the city and cut off on its 'island' from the life of the inhabitants was a deliberate marginalising of Remembrance of those who had died wearing a British uniform in the Great War. It sent a clear signal to those who looked back nostalgically to British rule and worked towards the construction of a particular memory of the dead as unfortunate pawns in the imperial adventures of their soon-to-be ex-master. Meanwhile a monument was unveiled immediately outside the parliament building commemorating the late first President of Ireland – Arthur Griffiths – and the pre-eminent military figure behind Irish resistance to British rule – Michael Collins. This is just one example of the struggle over the shaping of the collective memory of the Great War in the service of competing national aspirations. Whilst the Irish government were marginalising monuments to the war their defeated ex-comrades, still operating outside the law, were making it clear that their idea of Ireland was different by blowing monuments up.

In Great Britain memorials built to commemorate deaths in the First World War, and later inscribed with yet more names from the Second, are ubiquitous. The Imperial War Museum's database lists over 40,000 of them. By the mid-thirties there was barely a village that did not have some form of marker of the event. In the Irish Free State, by contrast, some parts of the country were completely devoid of memorials to those who had died serving in the British Forces. In Co. Kerry, in the west, for instance, where about one hundred people died in the War of Independence and the Civil War they are commemorated by about seventy memorials. The three thousand who died in the world wars had not a single marker to their memory (Dudley Edwards, 2000: 335). The IRA had been blowing up monuments to the dead of the Great War since 1919. They also destroyed halls of the British Legion, the primary British Army ex-service charity. These halls, which came to be multipurpose community leisure venues in some British towns and

thus potential daily reminders of military service, were literally blown away. (Leonard, 1996: 103; Burke, 2004: 9-10)

Another type of memorial text also drew attacks, in this case necessarily personal and physical – the poppy. Poppy snatching in the streets of Dublin was such a common event that wearers anticipated it and some put razors behind their blooms to wound their Republican assailants. Unsurprisingly, eventually poppy wearing became a practice largely undertaken in what was seen as safe territory. (Leonard, 1996: 104)

Within the arena of popular culture there was pressure that worked against the production of other texts that would give rise to memories of the war. Some were denied a stage, quite literally in the case of O'Casey's play *The Silver Tassie* in 1928. Yeats at the Abbey Theatre made the decision, argues Jeffery, not just on the grounds of literary merit but also in face of the political difficulty of portraying British soldiers sympathetically (2000: 95). Other stories were much more obviously censored by what could be described as 'physical-force censorship'. Republicans warned newspapers not to publish pictures of Armistice Day parades and encouraged boycotts of cinemas with the wrong screening policy i.e. showing war films. When the film *Ypres* was being shown in a Dublin cinema in November 1925 the print was stolen and, after another had been obtained, the cinema bombed. Gardai (policemen) on duty outside were injured in the attack. One of them had actually survived the original battle but had now fallen foul of attempts to block a memory of it (Leonard, 1996: 103-5).

Where monuments to the dead of the war survived in the heart of Dublin their meaning often did not. Local government here played their part in disrupting attempts to construct a favourable memory of Irish involvement in the Great War at the heart of daily life in the capital. Their weapon was ennui inducing bureaucracy rather than explosives. Such a memory would perish not with a bang but with a whimper. The trust wishing to erect a bust of the enigmatic Irish nationalist and British Army recruitment officer Captain Tom Kettle in St Stephen's Green, the popular small park in the heart of Dublin, in 1927 was told by the Commissioner of Public Works that the inscription, which described him as 'Poet, Essayist, Patriot', could not also read 'killed in France 1916' (Pašeta, 2002). One presumes that the official did not wish the passing public to wonder why a patriot should have been killed in France rather than Dublin in that ultra-significant year. The myth of '1916' that had been constructed in Ireland focused solely on the uprising by Republicans – the gloriously constructed 'Easter Rising - and eschewed any mention of the other momentous events of

that year, such as the Battle of the Somme, taking place away from the island. So successful was this mythologizing that the fact that scores of thousands of 'Irishmen' were encouraged to enlist in the British Army by Irish nationalist leaders such as Kettle and that such an act was argued to be one of an Irish patriot was already being marginalized in the collective memory of those years.

At the time of the Great War Ireland had been part of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland for more than a hundred years and for several hundred years before that the island had been subject to dominance by the English throne. Most generations, however, had seen some attempt by Irish nationalists to break free of this grip. The decades preceding the war saw this political wish embodied most popularly by the movement to create a 'Home Rule' parliament in Dublin. The ability of nationalist Irish MPs (Members of Parliament) at Westminster to tip the party political balance of power enabled them to press for this devolution of state power and by the summer of 1914 the only impediment to the implementation of Irish 'Home Rule' was the opposition of a sizable, and powerful, part of the population concentrated, in particular, in the north-east of the island.

These 'Unionists' were so opposed to the idea of Home Rule, the loss of the close connection with the rest of the UK and the tying in with what they feared would become a a country dominated by Rome and economically lame that they raised a large militia – the Ulster Volunteer Force (UVF) – to prevent it. The Irish nationalists responded by raising their own militia – the Irish Volunteers. The opposing groups, facing up to the increasing likelihood of both Home Rule and partition of the island, were engaged in negotiations with the government to obtain the best outcome when matters on the larger European stage intervened.

Thus it was that, aside from the more universal reasons why young men might have rushed to 'join up' in 1914 – poverty, boredom, camaraderie, masculinity – Irish Nationalists enlisted in the British Army because they were urged to do so by their leaders in the hope of demonstrating Ireland's loyalty to the British Crown and Empire . This, it was believed, would ensure government support when the time came to once again discuss implementation, suspended for the duration of the war, of the recently passed Home Rule Act. Unionist leaders in the north, bitterly opposed to Home Rule and demanding partition of the island in the event of it, offered the UVF as a ready-made division in return for similar government support for their demands – a partition of the island and one that gave them six of the nine counties of the province of Ulster. (Jeffery, 2000)

A large number of the Ulster Volunteer Force thus enlisted in the British Army en masse to form the bulk of the 36th (Ulster) Division. Many of the Irish Volunteers went into the 16th (Irish) and 10th (Irish) Divisions and many of the Irish regiments of the British Army such as the Royal Dublin Fusiliers, the Connaught Rangers, the Royal Inniskilling Fusiliers and many others. They saw action in some of the bloodiest fighting of the war – the 10th at Gallipoli, the 16th at Passchendaele/Ypres and both the 36th and the16[th] at the Somme. Altogether about 200,000 Irishmen fought in the British Army in World War One and at least 30,000 died in the conflict. (Jeffery, 2000: 35, see also Denham, 1992, Cooper, 1993; and Boyce, 2002)

Tom Kettle had been in Belgium buying guns for the Irish Volunteers when Germany invaded. He returned to Ireland and, in line with calls by nationalist leaders, enlisted in the British Army. Ill health, and his skills as an orator, resulted in him being used as a recruiting officer in Ireland despite his desire to serve at the front and by the time he finally managed to get an active service posting the Republican uprising centred on Dublin had undermined any hope of proving 'Ireland's' loyalty to the Empire. As he bitterly, and presciently, noted as he prepared to leave for the Somme

> These men will go down to history as heroes and martyrs, and I will go down – if I go down at all – as a bloody British officer. (cited in Paseta, 2002: 22)

When eventually the monument to his memory was completed and installed in 1937 its inscription now concluded 'killed at Guinchy 9 September 1916': more precise and yet, for an increasing number of the population, suitably meaningless. (Jeffery, 2000: 128)

It was meaningless to an increasing number because, unlike in Great Britain, the country's involvement in the tumult of the Great War never became integrated into the typical school history curriculum. Whilst a programme of teaching the ancient Irish legends was promoted in all schools and the Irish language was a compulsory subject for all, if not the medium of teaching, the Great War was rendered not part of the national story by its exclusion. In the schools and colleges of the Free State a 'veil of silence', as Myles Dungan describes it, 'obscured the sacrifice and legitimacy of service in the Great War from generations of teachers of Irish history' (1997: 42). He lends this claim no little authority when he admits that, as an ex-history teacher, he must be counted amongst their number. Tom Burke, the founder of the Royal Dublin Fusiliers Association and an influential figure in recent 'Remembrance' developments, recalls that although the Christian Brothers gave him

a good education and taught him plenty of 'Irish History' he, like Dungan, knew nothing about the huge Irish involvement in the Great War nor the fact that Nationalist leaders at the time had encouraged their patriotic supporters to enlist in the British Army. In his subsequent organisational endeavours and research he confirmed that he was typical in this regard. (interview with author)

Thus the memory of the 1914-18 war disappeared from the landscape almost as completely as the bodies of so many of the men had disappeared in the carnage of the Western Front.   Where memorials remained most were crammed into the semi-private spaces of the Southern Protestants in their churches, schools, clubs and workplaces whilst only a few were left, like bronzed Kettle, to momentarily baffle picnickers. Prost's (1997) theorisation of the important role that memorials to the war dead play in the construction and maintenance of a collective national memory encourages us to consider the consequences of these two different experiences of war memorials within the one 'nation'. The majority of the population will have had relatively little experience of the commemoration of the dead of the Great War whilst the 'Anglican' population would have grown accustomed to seeing such monuments. To what extent will this lead to differing perceptions of the nation; of themselves in relation to the nation; and of 'their' nation's Other – England? To what extent do such experiences not just result from but produce their identity as the internal Others (Tzanelli, 2008) variously described as 'Anglo-Irish', 'Southern Unionist' or 'West Brit'?

Such successful anti-Remembrance activities as those mentioned above illustrate the fact that agency can be demonstrated in the ability to discourage, prevent and destroy as well as more obviously in acts of encouragement, enablement and creation. Remembering this is an essential element of researching visual culture. What don't you see? What has disappeared? It is often very clear to see what has been derided or visual attacked – the mocking graffiti or the paint bomb on the mural – but more difficult to remember to look for what is absent.

The public process of mourning and memorializing was blocked not only by the suppressive actions of others but also by the silence within and between the families of the veterans and the dead. Time and again in researching this subject one comes across the phrase 'it wasn't talked about'. Ruth Dudley Edwards recounts how in the 1950s one of her grandmothers called Ruth's brother into her bedroom and showed him his grandfather's British Army commission from 1916. She insisted that the door be kept shut and nobody

be told. She was apparently particularly concerned lest their other 'Sinn Féin' grandmother should hear about it. (Dudley Edwards, 2000: 309; see also Dungan, 1995; Boyce, 2002: 206-7). As F. X. Martin despaired, writing in 1967, in the aftermath of the 50th anniversary celebration of Easter 1916, it was difficult at that time to 'find men and women who will acknowledge that they are the children of men who were serving during 1916 in the British Army' (1967: 68).

Tom Burke, interviewing in 1995 a then octogenarian son of an Irish soldier of the Great War, found his subject, and himself, overcome with emotion when his subject apologized for his tears but explained that they were because this was the first time in his life he had felt able or been encouraged to talk to anyone about his father's army history. The memories of his father and uncle had been kept sealed in a biscuit tin, a shoe box and his mind for decades and would have disappeared with their owner on his death. (interview with author)

With the outbreak of the Second World War, or 'The Emergency' as it was known in the Free State, and with Éamon de Valera's Anti-Treaty Fianna Fáil party now firmly established in government, Remembrance parades were banned, ostensibly so as not to undermine the Irish declaration of neutrality. Though they re-commenced after the war this break in practice could be seen as one of the main causes of the subsequent decreased level of public participation (Jeffrey 2000: 135). Connerton's (1989) conceptualisation of repeated rituals leading to the accretion of memory on the body in a process he likens to silting can be useful here. But the blockage in the rituals, and thus the memories, caused by their suspension during the war encourage a different imagining of this analogy. Without the repetitive flow of ritual the body ceases to perform the memory. A memory that had life, continuity, and an unbroken connection with the source becomes a blocked channel. Merely a mental memory: and this still backwater loses its relevance, its life and its power.

The Free State's neutral stance during the Second World War was also a hugely powerful symbol that distanced the young state from Ireland's historical military connections with the British Army. The fact that an estimated 50,000 Irish citizens volunteered to serve with British forces during the war, however, continued that connection at the personal, family, level. (Girvin & Roberts, 2000)

In time, *services* of remembrance also came to be increasingly associated with the minority Anglican Church of Ireland. Thus these ceremonies disappeared from view for the vast,

Catholic, majority of the population of the Republic. The dominant Roman Catholic Church in Ireland was in a different position to the majority churches in France and England. All can be assumed to have shared the desire to use the opportunity of Remembrance texts and practices to sell religion, particularly as practiced in their church (Connelly, 2002) but the church in Ireland was a key player in the discursive construction of Ireland as distinct from Britain and particularly England with its 'established' Anglican Church linked to the state. Remembrance was a ground of commonality that problematized the conceptualisation of the Irish as having a separate existence from the British and as such the RC church may well have shared the Irish government's lack of enthusiasm for maintaining Remembrance practices. Certainly Irish involvement in the Great War was generally not taught in schools, largely run by the church.

Thus, in the Irish Free State and subsequently the Irish Republic, Remembrance of the war was formally marginalised both explicitly in terms of government policy and implicitly with regard to local authority priorities, school curricula and religious services. It was also suppressed informally both publicly by militant republicanism and privately within and between families of many of the veterans. For subsequent generations the Unknown Soldier was actually the unknown uncle, whose picture had been laid to rest in a dark drawer whilst the picture of his IRA brother was proudly displayed on the wall.

Remembrance and Northern Ireland

In Northern Ireland, by contrast, Remembrance was public, loud, and defiant. Here the main memorials to the dead of the war were placed at the symbolic heart of the major cities of Belfast and 'Londonderry' (as most of those attending ceremonies at it would call the city rather than 'Derry'). In Belfast the memorial is a cenotaph placed within Gardens of Remembrance at the side of the City Hall. The building, the home of a city council dominated by Unionists, was a symbol of Unionist power in 'Northern Ireland'. The significance of the monument alongside it both supported that power and was shaped by it.

Remembrance in Northern Ireland shared much with that in Great Britain but with certain additions and twists. The discourses of loyalty, unionism, martial duty, masculinity and sacred sacrifice combined here to fix the meaning of the loss of life and, in particular, the appalling losses suffered by the 36th Ulster Division on the first day of the Battle of the

Somme. The fact that the Division was formed from already existing units of the Anti-Home Rule militia the Ulster Volunteer Force concentrated the losses in the same way as it did in many places of Britain due to the peculiarities of the Pals Battalions. As phenomena, these units, and the units of the 36th, raise particular issues with respect to the formation of a collective memory. The Pals Battalions were designed to improve recruitment in the days before conscription and this worked by promising to keep together in the one battalion all the 'pals' who had enlisted together rather than to disperse them around the many different branches and units of the forces. The promise that you would spend the war alongside your friends, neighbours and work colleagues was one that the government were eventually going to regret making. Whilst such an arrangement helped with morale amongst the recruits it had an awful effect on morale back home when many of the young men from a small town or area like the Shankill were all involved in a disastrous event such as the first day of the Battle of the Somme. As the tourist information boards foreground on the Shankill, of the 750 men who left the terraces of the Shankill only 76 made it home. All areas of the UK suffered losses but those areas with Pals Battalions who had the misfortune to take part in such misadventures were hit not only hard but also suddenly. The ensuing trauma and grief was not only the shared experience of all those who had lost loved ones in the war but a simultaneously shared one in a tight-knit community. The unique formation of the 36th made such an outcome much more likely than it was in the rest of the UK and the potential effects of this on how the memory of the war and 'Ulster's' role in it developed should not be discounted.

When the young men of the Shankill were virtually wiped out on that summer's morning in 1916 the incomprehensible loss to the community had to be made sense of. The answer that soon dominated the collective memory of the event was that they had died in a 'blood sacrifice' that could never be forgotten by the Crown. 'The People', i.e. the Protestant population, could, surely, now, never be abandoned to Papism and Fenianism in a united and independent Ireland. They had 'performed' their duty, their loyalty and their membership of the nation of the United Kingdom and the Empire. This of course, fitted perfectly into the existing discourse of Orangeism, the movement that most publicly performed loyalty to the Crown, and, by a quirk of timing, the devastating news of the losses at the Somme arrived at the height of the Orange Order's 'marching season'. From the following year some Orange Lodges, long used to celebrating, on the 12th of July, William of Orange's victory over the Catholic James II at the Battle of the Boyne in 1690, also paraded on and around the 1st of July to commemorate this much more recent battle

honour. The Order claim such a link for the contentious Drumcree parade, scene of annual protests in the mid-1990s (Ryder & Kearney, 2001: 199). Most other parades featured banners commemorating the Somme. It was thus woven into the symbolism of this pageant of identity and power.

Conclusion

Through such incorporation into the discourse of the 'Loyal' Orders, exclusively Protestant anti-nationalist organisations that were first established to oppose the Republicanism of the United Irishmen at the end of the 18th century, the meaning of the Somme became fixed, or made 'myth' in the sense established by Roland Barthes (1972). This myth, as it came to be constructed in Ireland, fixed the Somme as a Protestant event, a British event, a Unionist event, and, therefore an anti-'Irish' event.

As a result of such public commemorations in the North, and despite the reluctance of many old soldiers to talk of the war, family involvement here was acknowledged and the memory of it kept very much alive amongst the Unionist population. Amongst nationalists throughout the island, by contrast, discursive interventions were, as has been mentioned, largely suppressed in the crucial arena of popular story telling – nationally, communally and within the family. National government had marginalised the texts and practices of Remembrance. In contrast they had made commemoration of the events and 'sacrifices' of the Easter Rising and War of Independence central to construction of the new nation. Remembrance of the Great War was significant in the construction of Ireland by its increasing and deliberate absence from the official life of the nation. The discourse of the Irish nation and national identity was a construction that filled up the necessary categories of 'patriot' 'martyr' and 'sacrifice' from a particular choice of sources. These necessarily did not include the many wars in which the Irish had fought alongside the British, including the Great War. Such examples would not have served to demonstrate the separateness of the Irish just as commemorating them would not have served to demonstrate the differences between them and their Other – the English. Generations thus grew up in all parts of the island believing that remembrance of the dead of the Great War was a Protestant, Unionist ritual performed not only silently but also noisily on the streets of Northern Ireland. It had nothing to do with the Irish Republic. How could it? And it obviously had nothing to do with Irish nationalism.

The patriotic aspirations that had led the leaders of constitutional Irish nationalism to encourage their supporters to enlist in the British Army and fight in the Great War had become difficult not only to acknowledge but also to understand. The 'structure of feeling' (Williams 1977:131) of that previous age was now, as is ever the case, almost impossible to comprehend. The radical shift in the parameters of Irish nationalism brought about by the Easter Rising and also the death toll of the war itself had caused this. Remembrance of the war had been used by the Irish government, and particularly after the coming to power of De Valera's Anti-Treaty Republicans in their guise as Fianna Fail, to mark a difference between the Irish nation and their previous fellow subjects of the Crown in the UK, and particularly the English. Doing this was part of the discursive construction of the Irish nation. Conversely the Unionists of Northern Ireland had used Remembrance to cement their membership of the UK through exploiting its potential for constructing a story of sacrifice now owed as debt and loyalty demanding reciprocation. They had woven it so tightly into the discourse of the anti-Catholic Orange movement that it had been made unattractive if not almost inaccessible to much of the population of the island and certainly those now experiencing life as second-class citizens in Northern Ireland.

What had been constructed, argued Martin in 1967, was 'the great oblivion, a national amnesia' (p68). In consequence - the linked discourses of *Irish nationalism* and *identity in Ireland* had come to be narrowly defined. A range of possible ways to be Irish, to be British, to be patriotic had been excised. The language of this discourse had been structured in such a way that certain opposites could never meet; certain connections could never be broken. Or so it seemed. To be, or have been, Irish was to be not British and therefore, naturally, not part of the British Army. To be fighting for Ireland referred to fighting against the British and an Irish nationalist in particular would fight against the British and not fight alongside them. The Somme belonged to the Unionists of Northern Ireland. For the rest of the population of the island Remembrance Day and the poppy represented the British Army, their long-time foes and oppressors. After the twenties this became an historical reference but with the reigniting of the troubles in the north in the late sixties it renewed its currency. It is to an exploration of the discursive construction of Remembrance and national identity under these new circumstances that we will now move.

Chapter 5: The Role of Remembrance in the 'Troubles' and the 'Peace Process': Contextualising and Theorising Remembrance in Northern Ireland 1969-2016

Introduction

In this chapter I aim to continue to explore and explain the ways in which Remembrance of the First World War has been used in the construction of the discourse of national identity on the island of Ireland but with an increasing focus on Northern Ireland. In the last chapter I outlined how Remembrance became a site for conflicts over national identity before becoming marginalised and forgotten in the course of the Irish state's construction of its own distinctiveness. I also explained how the power of Remembrance to invoke the patriotic sacrifice made by the 'loyal' Ulster Unionists led to it being maintained as a central part of the discourse of identity for them.

What I now intend to examine is the relationship between Remembrance and the political situation in Northern Ireland that developed in the late 1960s and became known as the 'Troubles'. In the process I hope to show how the memory work done before and during this period led to the further construction of opposing identities within the north and how this work was influenced by events on the streets and in the negotiating rooms of governments. This will lead us to the most obvious and well known connection between Remembrance and political violence in Northern Ireland – the 'Poppy Day Massacre' at Enniskillen in 1987.

After examining the impact of this event on the meaning of Remembrance on the island I will explore how the texts and practices of Remembrance have been mobilised in a variety of ways and by a range of actors in the political manoeuvrings that have become most widely, but not uncontroversially, known as the Northern Ireland 'Peace Process'. In the course of doing this I hope to present enough description and analysis of how this has been carried out to enable the relevance of this case to become clear to all those faced with, in some ways, similar circumstances.

Remembrance in the 'Orange State' 1920-1969

Whilst Remembrance of the First World War had become marginalised in the course of the construction of the new nation of Ireland in the Irish Free State, and, subsequently, in the Irish Republic, it had remained a very visible part of civic life in the new statelet of Northern

Ireland. As described in the previous chapter, this had included its incorporation into the texts and practices associated with the institution of Orangeism. In order to understand how this shaped the discourse of Remembrance on the island it is necessary to first understand how the memory work carried out by the Orange institutions had worked to construct identities on the island based on religion and political loyalty.

The Loyal Orders, including the 'Orange Order', the 'Royal Black Preceptory', and the 'Apprentice Boys of Derry' all claim a lineage going back to much earlier conflicts between Protestants and Catholics in Ireland. In particular the Orange Order take their name from King William III of England, better known as William of Orange, and a hero of Protestant Europeans against the Catholic monarchies of Spain and France. His installation as a replacement for the suspect Catholic James II on the British throne was followed by the suppression of support for James in Ireland. Key events in the campaign that led to William's victory and the vanquishing of James and his Catholic supporters included the Siege of Derry of 1688-89 and the battle of the Boyne on the 12th of July 1690. Whilst the Apprentice Boys are named for 'their' role in the former, the other Loyal Orders actually emerged in opposition to the increased agitation for independence at the time of the United Irishmen a hundred years later. For the British crown, one of the most disturbing aspects of this revolutionary movement was the union, stated in its name, between disenfranchised Catholics *and* Presbyterians as 'Irishmen' identified in opposition to their oppressor – Britain. Whilst initially set up to co-ordinate and legitimate sectarian gang conflict against the Catholic 'Defenders' one important function of the Orders was to encourage and police separation between the two religious constituencies that had come together in the United Irishmen movement. It did this most effectively by the violence visited upon Catholics by its proudly Protestant members. This worked to maintain and strengthen these as separated identities, particularly amongst the 'working class' population who experienced, and carried out, the bulk of such violence. The Orders also established rules that acted to separate the congregations. Members could not be Catholics or the close relatives of Catholics. It was also forbidden for members to attend a Catholic mass including any wedding or funeral service. These rules are still in existence. When Tom Elliott, the leader of the Ulster Unionist Party, attended the funeral in 2011 of Roman Catholic police officer Ronan Kerr, killed by the Real IRA, one Orange lodge in Belfast called for disciplinary action to be taken against him (BBC 2011a).

The Orders are organised in a similar way to the Freemasons with local lodges, secret initiations and other rituals and the heavy use of symbols and regalia. The most public aspect of membership are the 'demonstrations' or parades that occur throughout the year but with particular frequency close to the anniversary of William's victory at the Boyne in July. These parades typically involve members, in full regalia, marching to and from a place of worship. They are normally accompanied by at least one and sometimes many bands. Defenders of these parades state that they are merely exercising their right to celebrate their culture and religion in the course of walking their 'traditional' route to their church. Critics, however, argue that they are provocative demonstrations of power over the local Catholic population. They are certainly events that cause tension and often violence when they march through or close by 'Catholic areas'.

Senior members of the Orders were at the heart of the drawing up of the Solemn League and Covenant pledging resistance to Home Rule for Ireland in 1912, the subsequent raising and arming of the anti-Home Rule militia the Ulster Volunteer Force and the formation of the 36th (Ulster) Division of the British Army out of this militia during the First World War. Many of the rank-and-file signatories of the Covenant and members of the U.V.F. and 36th were also members of the Loyal Orders. When the 36th suffered their catastrophic casualties on the first day of the Battle of the Somme on July 1st 1916 it therefore affected many members of the movement. Because of this contingent accident of timing the news arrived in Belfast at the height of the summer marching season. This is the period of the year, leading up to the anniversary of William's victory over the Catholic James II at the Battle of the Boyne on July 12th, when the Orange Order holds a large number of parades across Northern Ireland. The war situation had already led to the cancellation of these parades and, instead, a five minutes silence was held across Ulster at noon on the 12th (Officer, 2001: 164). By the following year this latest martial adventure had already been woven into the mythology of the Orange Order as illustrated by its commemoration in the designs of some of the banners carried in the parades. (Useful sources on the Orange Order include Dudley Edwards, 2000; Ryder and Kearney, 2001; Lucy, 1989, 1997; McKay, 2000)

Mircea Eliade, in his (1989 [1954]) *The Myth of the Eternal Return*, argues that societies deal with the 'terror of history' – the unpredictability , irreversibility and absurdity of events – by making sense of events by relating them to archetypes within cyclical time and/or the state of the relationship between the people and God. Eliade believes that the 'peasant masses' in both archaic and modern societies, in particular, 'found their

consolation and support in the concept of archetypes and repetition' (p147). The historical personage is understood in terms of an exemplary hero; the historical event in terms of a mythical category. Both of these originate in the 'Great Time' – of gods and heroes, of first acts, exemplars – and have been 'repeated' many times through cyclical time. Through this process history is made meaningful. It is made coherent and also bearable. Life is as it ever was and for these well-known reasons. The reading of history as the will of a benevolent or vengeful God likewise provides meaning to otherwise arbitrary events. They are necessary in order that the people might be encouraged down the path of righteousness and thus to eventual salvation.

Remembrance rituals in Northern Ireland can be seen, from this perspective, to act to equate the Unionist dead of the First World War, and particularly the battle of the Somme, with earlier warriors – the defenders of besieged 'Londonderry' and the Williamite armies at the Battle of the Boyne. This places them within a mythical category as defenders of 'the people' and the union with Britain. In a more global context the dead of the war will be equated with the mythological figures of warriors – such as Cú Chulainn in Ireland or King Arthur in Britain – who fought for their people and their own reputation in epic battles. Both 'levels' of mythologizing simultaneously work to equate the 'people' of the past with the 'people' of the present and thus support the reification of the nation. The soldiers' deaths would also be made meaningful by equation with the sacrifice of Christ and the martyrdom of the Christian saints. They will, thus, have attained paradise as a result of such sacrifice in the war against evil on behalf of their people.

The prominent role taken by members of the Protestant, anti-Catholic, Loyal Orders in the rituals of Remembrance can be seen not only as a reminder of such a religious element to the war but also, following Eliade's observation regarding the role of secret societies in ritual, as providing all present with a meeting with the ancestors (ibid: 69). In their Orange sashes they act as representatives for those from the 'Great Time' of the Solemn League and Covenant, the original UVF, and the subsequent 36th division.

Remembrance in Northern Ireland was thus closely associated with Orangeism and this link between Orange Parades and Remembrance endured. Eighty years on, the infamously contentious parade from Portadown to Drumcree caused a great deal of unrest including standoffs between marchers and the police and army, and rioting across Northern Ireland. One of the key arguments of the organisers against the restrictions imposed upon it was that the parade was a commemoration of the dead of the Somme. The violence eventually

resulted in the deaths by arson of four young children. Their family home was targeted because they were Catholics (Ryder and Kearney, 2001; Dudley Edwards, 2000; Pickering, 2009).

The reason for including here this explanation of the relationship between the institution of the Orange Order and Remembrance is to enable an understanding of the impact the incorporation of Remembrance into the parading and symbolism of Orangeism had on the meaning of Remembrance for the Catholic population of the island and in particular of Northern Ireland. Orangeism's sectarian antagonism towards Catholics rendered any rituals the former were involved with as events at which the Catholic population would not have felt welcome. Thus the meaning of the institution of Orangeism for the Catholics shaped the meaning of the practices and texts that paraded and celebrated this 'Protestant triumphalism'. This process intertextually discursively (Foucault, 1972) constructed Remembrance as being part of the Protestant, Unionist, and, from a Catholic perspective, sectarian triumphalism epitomised by Orangeism. As such it worked to construct involvement with it as at least 'non-Irish' and potentially 'anti-Irish'.

Within Northern Ireland another institution influential in the construction of the discourse of Remembrance was the government based at Stormont outside Belfast. Its association with Remembrance would contribute to the latter being made meaningful in such a way as to alienate most of the Catholic population. In order to understand how this aspect of the discourse worked one needs to be aware of the sectarian politics that dominated the statelet in the nearly five decades of its existence before the outbreak of the 'Troubles'.

James Craig, as the first Prime Minister of Northern Ireland, made the oft-quoted promise that the parliament at Stormont would be 'a Protestant parliament for a Protestant state' (Bardon, 2005: 538). His actions and those of his successors over the next fifty years did little to suggest that the promise had not been fulfilled. Catholics were, from the start, considered an enemy within. The early 1920s saw the 'putting out' of large numbers of Catholic families as they were intimidated or forced out of their homes. Such actions, which have since then come to be described as 'ethnic cleansing', resulted in the further segregation of large parts of Belfast and particularly those areas inhabited by the poorest sections of the working class. Discrimination against Catholics was widespread with several of the largest employers such as the docks, the shipyards and the big manufacturing companies employing relatively few Catholics. The police force and other arms of the state were also predominantly Protestant. The title of Michael Farrell's (1976) account of this

situation – *The Orange State* – sums up the experience of Catholics as the Other in this new political entity (see also Coogan, 1995; McCann, 1974; Kee, 1995; Toolis, 1995, Devlin, 1969). Stormont made little if any attempt to change this situation. The Catholic representatives in the parliament were always easily outnumbered and outvoted. The Northern Ireland establishment was solidly Unionist and solidly Protestant. For all these reasons Catholics within Northern Ireland were constructed as the internal Other: second-class citizens. The institutions of the state were therefore, understandably, viewed by them with distrust and resentment and it was these institutions that played a central role in the continued official commemoration of the First World War.

In the city of Belfast official state commemoration centred on the Cenotaph erected in the grounds of the City Hall: the home of the city council. The council, like the Stormont parliament, was controlled by Unionists. Remembrance ceremonies at the cenotaph, with their militaristic trappings and prominent Orange presence and overseen by the leaders of the Unionist community in Belfast were not a welcoming event for the Catholic nationalist population of the city. (McCaffrey, 2003)

The 'Troubles': Enter the British Army

By the late 1960s almost fifty years of 'Orange rule' had constructed discourses of division between the Unionist and Nationalist 'communities'. In the process it had constructed, reproduced and shaped these *as* 'communities'. The Catholic population was kept in its place by a heavily militarised Protestant population. The original UVF had been disbanded but its members had gone on to make up the bulk of the largely Protestant police force, the Royal Ulster Constabulary (RUC), as well as the militia of the 'B Specials'. Both organisations were to come to the attention of the world due to their partisan policing of the civil rights movement in Northern Ireland towards the end of the decade. Their failure to protect civil rights marchers from violent groups of Unionists, and, indeed, their own attacks on the marchers, led to riots in Derry. Their subsequent brutal attempts to put down these protests further inflamed the situation and spread it to Belfast. The forces of Unionism in Northern Ireland had so completely dominated the Nationalist population that the appearance on the streets of Belfast and Derry of the other old enemy, the British Army, as their replacements, was seen by some in the Nationalist community as a change for the

better (see, amongst many others, Devlin, 1969; Farrell, 1976; Coogan, 1995; Bew, 1993; Taylor, 1997, 1999, 2001; Ellis, 2006)

Such sentiments were short-lived. After initially placing themselves between the two warring factions, the British Army soon identified armed Republicans as their primary foe. At the same time Republicans saw the garrisoning of the 'province' with regiments of the British Army as a fresh opportunity to highlight the 'colonial' nature of the conflict. The combination of these two imperatives can be seen in the British Army's imposition of a curfew in the nationalist Falls Road area of Belfast during which they destructively searched houses looking for weaponry and the fact that it was then discursively constructed as the 'Rape of the Falls' in Republican mythology. Such a construction works with existing normative perspectives regarding rape to posit the place and the people as separate, innocent, vulnerable and violated. Further such incidents worked to firmly establish the British Army as an Other of the Irish Nationalist community in the north.

Perhaps the most influential single event in the modern Troubles in terms of constructing the British Soldier as the Irish Patriot's Other was the killing of thirteen unarmed demonstrators by the Parachute Regiment of the British Army in Derry in January 1972. After 'Bloody Sunday' British soldiers were not popularly viewed with sympathy amongst the Nationalist population. The killing of three young off-duty Scottish soldiers in Belfast the previous year had shocked and dismayed many in the nationalist community (Taylor, 1997; McKittrick et al, 2007). Such sympathy for dead British soldiers was now much less likely and certainly less publically stated. The killings of the soldiers made it clear that the Republicans saw themselves as engaged in a war against the British Army. The killings in Derry were seen by many in the nationalist community as stark evidence that the British Army saw itself as engaged in a war against all of them. In Northern Ireland, therefore, any military in attendance at Remembrance ceremonies were, by the early seventies, in a state of open warfare with Irish Republican paramilitaries and a growing number of the British Army dead being commemorated had been killed by these groups during that war. Attendance at Remembrance ceremonies and the wearing of the poppy became cemented even more as key annual markers of British nationality for the Protestant, Unionist population. (see e.g. Canavan, 2004)

This mythology was further boosted by the increased use of Great War symbolism by Loyalist paramilitaries. In the sixties the name of the UVF was revived and adopted by a group of Loyalist paramilitaries who gained instant notoriety when Gusty Spence was jailed

for life for the sectarian murder of a Catholic. Spence was one who had been raised on tales of the Great War. His father had been a member of the original UVF and ninety years later Gusty's study in Belfast was 'like a shrine to the Somme' (Taylor 1999: 24; see also Garland, 2001). The UVF constructed a myth of continuity with their historical namesake and therefore with the popular resistance to Home Rule and incorporation into the new Roman Catholic state.   This myth, therefore, also included the link to the 36th (Ulster) Division and thus 'the Somme'.

In the 1980s talks between the British and Irish governments eventually led to the Anglo-Irish   Agreement which, for the first time since the establishment of Northern Ireland, gave the government of the Irish Republic some say in certain areas of policy seen as best tackled on a 'cross-border' 'all-Ireland' basis. For many observers in the Unionist community this was a betrayal and the first step on the road to a British abandonment and a united Ireland. Concerned Loyalists wished to remind the British government of their historical loyalty in the hope of ensuring what they saw as a deserved reciprocation of that loyalty i.e. a halt to any further 'compromise' with the government of the Republic (see e.g. Loughlin, 2002). They increasingly drew on images of service in the British Army and particularly the 'blood sacrifice of the Somme' in the rhetoric of their political imagery most vividly in murals on the gable ends of the streets of terraced houses in their areas of northern cities and towns. Remembrance Day, thus, became even more closely connected symbolically with the unionist community.

Developments such as the revival of the UVF name by Loyalist paramilitaries and the increased use of symbols of the Great War by the Loyalist community demonstrate how memory work functions as discursive construction and leads to the shaping of meanings. These examples also illustrate the fluidity of meaning. 'UVF' is a readymade text capable of carrying a solidly constructed myth of resistance, popular support and trueness of purpose. Its application to this new group of sectarian killers and vigilantes both worked upon and strained its 'original' meaning. Combining this with the wearing of symbols of the Great War, i.e. the poppy, intertextually added a further layer of validity through the implication of sacrifice in the cause of patriotism and, in the local context, defence of the Union and the Protestant freedom of worship.

The material conditions of the Catholic population, resulting from the practices of, in particular, the dominant Unionist population – largely segregated from Protestants, discriminated against in employment, under-represented in the police force, continually

powerless in the chambers of democratic decision-making due to the Unionist majority constructed by Partition, the main target of the British Army now patrolling the streets, - worked to construct them as a 'community' and one defined against its Other – the Protestant 'community'. This discursive construction was complemented by that done in the realm of memory. The past was mobilised to give meaning to the present and to place the 'two communities' within a mythic history of continual conflict and essential difference. The population of the 'North' were thus divided along the 'natural' fault-lines of nationality and religion – British Protestants against Irish Catholics.

Enniskillen: The explosion of a Myth

It was in this context that the small Northern Irish town of Enniskillen came tragically into the consciousness of the world. And it was only the construction of the discourses of division, outlined above, that can have enabled the attack on it to make sense to those who carried it out.

The IRA bomb that exploded on 8th Nov 1987 next to a Remembrance Sunday ceremony in the town killed eleven civilians and injured a further 63. The day's death toll should have been much higher. A second bomb failed to go off 15 miles away in Tullyhommon close to a Remembrance Sunday parade of mainly young people from the area's Boy's and Girl's Brigades (McDaniel 1997: 119-20). This attack on a day that functioned as a National Day was, by extension, an attack on a nation. Yet it was to have unforeseen consequences for such a logic.

Whilst graffiti in Republican West Belfast read 'Remember Remember the 8th of November HAHA' most other commentators were appalled (Kee, 1995: 261). Even long term political supporters of the republican cause such as the USSR and Libya expressed their disgust (McDaniel, 1997: 83). The President of Sinn Féin, Gerry Adams, being interviewed years later admitted 'I think both in its conception and its execution it was a disaster … I make the point very consciously that what the IRA did was wrong.' He went on to say that the attack had deeply upset many long-standing committed republican activists in the Republic (ibid: 192).

Indeed there was a huge reaction in the Republic. 300,000 people – almost a tenth of the entire population – took the trouble to go and sign books of condolence in towns and cities across the country. In Dublin alone 49,000 names filled 40 books. These were taken to

Enniskillen by the Lord Mayor of Dublin Carmencita Hederman where she met relatives of the dead and, overcome with emotion, broke down and wept upon trying to deliver her speech (ibid:80).

The bombing dominated the news. Knowledge of the existence and persistence of the, for many, long-forgotten Remembrance rituals was almost unavoidable. The population of the Republic looked with opened eyes at the role of this commemoration in their country. The National War Memorial at Islandbridge, in Dublin, derelict since the sixties, was an obvious focus of attention and the government and the British Legion funded a restoration project. A number of other war memorials were restored and British Legion branches reopened. (Leonard, 1996: 109-110)

Memory work on the Island

One of the aims of my research into this topic was to explore the power different institutions, groups and individuals have had to shape the discourse of Remembrance on the island of Ireland. A survey of how various actors played a role in this over recent decades will both suggest further avenues to explore in present-day Belfast and also provide insights into the roles different types of actors are capable of playing and with what sort of effect. This survey will look at the role of politicians and identify the varying potential of different political post-holders to intervene in the discourse. It will look at the role of the professional storytellers of our age – the broadcasters, novelists, playwrights, historians and artists – and identify examples of their intervention. It will also look at the role of local 'community' groups and how they have enabled and shaped the discourse. In the shadow of Enniskillen it will also consider the potential displayed by the various combatant groups to influence the meaning of Remembrance.

The attack at Enniskillen occurred halfway through the period, starting with the Hunger Strikes of 1981 and reaching its more or less successful conclusion with the IRA ceasefire of 1994, when Sinn Fein were moving the mainstream Republican movement away from a military and towards a 'political' strategy (see e.g. Clarke, 1987). After Enniskillen the discursive dance of courtship involving the different camps on the island slowly came to incorporate a renewed interest in Remembrance into their choreography whilst on the sidelines hawk-eyed guardians of these political traditions kept a close eye on their movements.

There had already been some, largely unsuccessful, attempts at changing the traditional position of Remembrance in the play of Irish politics. In 1980 President Patrick Hillery rejected an invitation to the annual service at Dublin's Church of Ireland St Patrick's Cathedral as 'he did not attend the ceremonies of foreign armies' (Leonard, 1996:108). After some public dismay at this statement the Taoiseach (Prime Minister) sent a junior minister. The following year the Fianna Fáil defence minister attended. In 1983 the British Legion proposed the opening up of the ceremony to commemorate Irish deaths in all wars including UN service. The Government agreed to the Irish Defence Forces (IDF) playing a major role in the ceremony. This caused a public outcry. In following years a quieter IDF and government presence ruffled no republican feathers but with the return of Fianna Fáil to government ministerial attendance at the November Remembrance ceremonies was suspended. (Leonard, ibid) These developments and the reaction to them had encouraged government to look at the issue of official national commemorations of the past. A 'National Day of Commemoration' was established and the day settled upon for this was the Sunday nearest to July 11th, the date of the signing of the truce that ended the Anglo-Irish War in 1921. In creating this event and placing it elsewhere in the calendar Remembrance of the First World War, whilst being officially recognised, was, just like its national material manifestation at the memorial at Islandbridge, being marginalised. Here was another signification of its peripheral status in terms of the story of the nation. The choice of the Truce as a focal point rather than the Easter Rising or the end of the Civil War raises as many questions as it answers in terms of how the government of the day felt the day should function. Commemorative ceremonies on the day were held in the first year, 1986, at the Republican Garden of Remembrance in Parnell Square in the heart of Dublin. The fact that these rituals, taking place in this site sacred to the memory of the republican dead, 'honoured' those who had died wearing a British uniform as well as the rebels fighting the British did not go down well with many Republicans and subsequent ceremonies were relocated to the Royal Kilmainham Hospital, also in Dublin. One could even wonder whether the bombs at Enniskillen and Tullyhommon were a response to a perceived blurring of categories by the ceremony at Parnell Square? Were they an attempt to restate in the most material fashion the distance between the Republican movement and the British Army?

In 1992 President Mary Robinson attended a ceremony at the now restored monument in Enniskillen. The following year in the face of newspaper front pages showing poppy-wearing masked loyalists playing a very public part in the violence in the north she

attended the Remembrance Sunday ceremony in St Patrick's to commemorate the 75th anniversary of the ending of the Great War. Two years previously she had attended a 75th commemoration for the Rising. At St Patrick's she laid a wreath – laurels - green in a sea of red. (Leonard, op cit: 111) The poppy had become a symbol so closely associated with militant Britishness, either because of its connection with the British Army, still denying they had done anything wrong in Derry on 'Bloody Sunday' in 1972, or with Loyalist paramilitaries, that it was clearly seen as being toxic to the touch of any political figure in the Republic or the Republican movement on the island as a whole.

1994 saw the most crucial political development – the paramilitary ceasefires. This dramatic easing of the threat of violence enabled individuals and groups to risk taking steps 'across the divide' and also to ask questions of their own 'community' and their place within it. This trend can be seen in most detail in the fascinating unfolding of ideas as presented in the Island pamphlets. These are the edited discussions of groups coming together in Belfast to explore a range of issues but particularly how to maintain and shape the 'peace' through dialogue, mutual understanding and exploration of identity. One of the first pamphlets, published the year before the ceasefires, is entitled 'Sacrifice on the Somme: Ulster's 'cross-community' sacrifice in the First World War' (Hall, 1993).

In the same year as these ceasefires a fully restored Islandbridge was also declared open and it was there, the following April, at a 50th commemoration of the end of WWII in Europe, VE Day (Victory in Europe) as it is known in Britain, that the Taoiseach, John Bruton, recognized that:

> 'the sacrifice in the last war, and in the First World War, are part of a larger shared experience going back for a thousand years … In this commemoration we remember a British part of the inheritance of all who live in Ireland.' (in Lucy & McClure, 1997: 24)

His use of 'inheritance' rather than other potential paradigmatic choices such as 'identity' is significant. An inheritance is left to us. It was accrued, or constructed, and valued in the past. Our evaluation of it need not be positive. But we cannot deny that it has played some part in the history of our 'family'. 'Identity' is not only assumed to be handed down but also accepted, if not embraced, by the 'recipient' in the present day.

Bruton was having a busy day. The morning had seen him at a ceremony commemorating the anniversary of the Easter Rising. Significantly Tom Hartley, the chairman of the latest

reinvigoration/reincarnation of Sinn Féin was also in attendance at Islandbridge. The coincidental convergence of these two anniversaries was exploited by the Irish government. Just as the President had established her commemorative inclusivity by honouring the dead of the Rising before the dead of the Great War, so the head of the government followed suit. The steps that were being taken towards a cessation of violence on the part of the paramilitaries and, in particular, the presence of the Republican representative Hartley at the ceremony enabled the Taoiseach to take a leading role in the ceremony without too much fear of concerted opposition to his commemorating those who died wearing a British Army uniform whilst that same army was still garrisoning part of the island and patrolling the streets of its second city. It was also significant that the event had a primary focus on the Second World War, in which the Republic had been officially neutral but in which at least 50,000 Irish citizens had fought in the British and other Allied forces. The myth, to use Barthes'(1972) term, of WWII is that those fighting on the Allied side were fighting a just war against the evils of Nazism and fascistic Japan. Honouring those who had died in such a fight is less open to criticism in Ireland than doing the same for those whose deaths had occurred in a fight largely held to have been an imperial power struggle after which the rights and liberties of the Irish were ignored despite the sacrifices foolishly made in the service of her old oppressor. So the event is ostensibly focused on WWII but affords Bruton the opportunity to include reference to WWI and make his point about the British 'inheritance' of the population of the island.

At the same time as these developments were taking place individuals like Tom Burke were also at work collecting and stirring memories. He started to do a little local history research in Dublin which led him to talk to a local octogenarian who shared his memories and mementoes of his Great War veteran father and in the process moved Burke greatly by explaining his sudden tears as the result of feeling able, for the first time in his life, to talk about this aspect of his past (interview with author). Burke went on RTE (the Irish national state broadcaster) radio late one night to share these long silent memories and ask for more and was deluged with responses. At his request Dublin Council agreed to host an exhibition of memorabilia of the Great War and in particular the Royal Dublin Fusiliers regiment. The exhibition was opened by the Tánaiste (Deputy Prime Minister), visited by the President and a range of political figures from across the island. In this example we see that whilst some of the actors may, like Burke, be politically unaffiliated individual citizens the level of support they receive can be evidence of the political will at a national government level as well as city level to exploit this 'apolitical' private endeavour. This

illustrates the important role powerful institutions play in the shaping of discourses. Dublin Council providing a venue for the exhibition not only enables the communication of the story of Irish involvement in the Great War it also validates the re-telling of that story. The attendance of the President and other senior political figures likewise not only ensure it receives wider media coverage but also serve as a material endorsement. In 2001 the Royal Dublin Fusiliers Association, founded by Burke in 1996, was honoured at a State Reception at Dublin Castle. Such actions can be seen as memory work undertaken by powerful institutions that act to reproduce, maintain or, as in this example, reshape the discourse of 'official memory' or 'public memory' as Bodnar (1992:13) describes it. His belief that it 'emerges from the intersection of official and vernacular cultural expressions' could be seen to be illustrated by this example.

The caution with which political figures engaged with these potentially contentious memories can be understood when one observes the fate of Donegal TD (Teachta Dála – elected member of the Dáil) Paddy Harte. After visiting the hugely moving graveyards of Flanders in 1996, he called on his peers to wear the poppy in parliament. A public outcry ensued. A few months later, and one suspects not unconnected to this, Harte lost his seat to a Republican after having held it for the previous thirty-five years. It was to be another sixteen years before another TD – Fine Gael's Frank Feighan – felt able to wear the poppy in the chamber in 2012 (*Irish Independent*, 10.11.12). The reporter mentioning this also mentions the experiment he tried by walking around Dublin for four days with a poppy on his lapel. It drew a range of reactions – some supportive some threatening – but the aspect of his anecdote that illustrates the still existing view of the poppy in the Republic, and supports my own observations, is that he saw only one other person wearing the same. Poppies do exist in the Republic but they are worn in private or the safe space of Remembrance services in St Patrick's cathedral and Islandbridge. As I have observed when attending such ceremonies, as the participants move back into the city's streets so the red markers disappear behind turned lapels and smoothly donned raincoats.

Examples of Memory Work

It is therefore understandable that new president Mary McAleese eschewed some calls for her to wear a poppy at her inauguration on 11th November 1997 but within a year she, along with Queen Elizabeth II of the UK and the King of Belgium, were demonstrating the

usefulness of the 'apolitical' role of a 'figurehead' head of state at the opening of a remarkable new memorial to the Irish dead of the First World War. The location, Messines in Belgium, was close to where the 16th Irish Division (largely Nationalist) and 36th Ulster Division (Unionist) had fought side by side (rather than face-to-face). The memorial is called 'The Island of Ireland Peace Park' and was the idea of the ex-Irish parliamentary member Paddy Harte, mentioned above, and Glen Barr, a Northern Ireland former loyalist leader who had gone on to be a community worker. They launched a 'Journey of Reconciliation' which used Messines' potential for the construction of a shared history to bring together groups from across the political divide in Northern Ireland to visit the sites where many of their grandfathers fought side by side (interview with Glen Barr). Those meeting ranged from youth groups and conventional politicians to paramilitaries. This 'sharing' of memories of the First World War has become a medium for communication between communities and also a vehicle for exploring the identities of those communities. This initiative forms one of my case studies and is dealt with in detail in chapter 9.

A range of other explorations have appeared over the past three decades. Textual interventions included the BBC's 1982 (repeated 1984) adaptation of Jennifer Johnson's 1974 'Irish in the trenches' novel *How many miles to Babylon*. During filming she asked a group of extras - Irish Army soldiers dressed in British uniforms – if any of their relatives had fought in the Great War. They looked at her in silence. Eventually one of them declared that, yes, his grandfather had been in the Connaught Rangers. After this more of them 'owned up' to a family connection. She realized that they found it very difficult to admit this to each other. (cited in Boyce, 2002: 206-7) In 1985 Frank McGuinness's play *Observe the Sons of Ulster Marching towards the Somme* was first staged and 1987 saw the publication of Philip Orr's history of the 36th Division *The Road to the Somme*. Both works cast a critical eye at the mythology of the Somme. As Mikami argues (2002: 21) McGuinness worked within the context of myth whilst Orr attempts to demythologise. Both works do this, in part, through the presentation of contradicting personal memories. In doing so they take 'autobiographical' memory and, through a process of selection and contextualisation, make from it 'historical' memory (Halbwachs, 1922: 24). The two volumes of *Irish Voices from the Great War* produced by Myles Dungan follow in this tradition and he acknowledges McGuinness as his initial inspiration for the project – 'He, like me, had never been told' (1995: 11) .

Journalists, most notably the polemical Kevin Myers, then of the *Irish Times*, periodically tried to raise the subject and academic writers led by pioneers like David Fitzpatrick started to revisit it. Subsequent to Enniskillen, studies of Irish regiments in the Great War, such as Tim Denman's *Ireland's Unknown Soldiers: the 16th (Irish) Division in the Great War 1914-1918* and Tom Johnstone's *Orange, Green and Khaki: The story of the Irish regiments in the Great War, 1914-1918*, started to appear in the early nineties. Amateur historians followed this lead and produced more such works on a localized level and since then a much wider range of titles have appeared (see e.g. Cooper, 1993; Dooley, 1995; Falls, 1998 [1921]; Jeffrey, 2000; Gregory and Pašeta, 2002; Johnson, 2003; Martin, 2006; Connolly, 2008; Horne, 2008; Grayson, 2009; Drumm, 2010; Richardson, 2010; Myers, 2014). Resistance to, or lack of awareness of (?!), this renewed interest in re-reading Ireland's involvement in the Great War is perhaps most easily experienced by looking in Hickey and Doherty's *A New Dictionary of Irish History from 1800* – published in 2003. You will search in vain for any entry devoted to the event that Jeffery describes as 'the single most central experience in twentieth-century Ireland' (2000: 2). It is telling that, on the occasion of my visit, this was the chosen general history of Ireland on offer in the gift shop leading into the library at Trinity College Dublin. The library is home to the *Book of Kells* – the illustrated manuscript that draws more than half a million visitors annually making it one of the most popular attractions on the island. The wares on sale in the shop are, not surprisingly, aimed at the many visitors 'doing' Ireland in a short visit. For the student of nationalism it can be read as a fascinating micro-construction of the nation. It is clear that, following the logic set out by O'Higgins in the 1920s (see Chapter 4), the authors do not see the First World War as part of the narrative that constructs the Irish nation. This cataclysmic event that affected the lives of the population in a range of significant ways and which influenced the subsequent form of the Irish state is therefore omitted. It is seen as British history, not Irish.

In the field of fiction Sebastian Barry has addressed the era in several of his works such as the novels *The Whereabouts of Eneas McNulty* (1998), *A Long, Long Way* (2005), and, referencing Kettle, *The Secret Scripture* (2008). *A Long, Long Way*, in telling the story of Willie Dunne, specifically addresses the enlistment of young men into the British Army in the Great War and, through a believable plot twist, throws the protagonist into the, for him bewildering and for the reader freshly re-complicated, events of the uprising in Dublin in 1916. The novel was a great success: shortlisted for the Man Booker Prize and, much more significantly for a reader of Irish attitudes towards Remembrance, chosen for promotion by

Dublin City Council as their *One City, One Book* choice in 2007. Here again we see the workings of powerful institutions in the construction of 'official memory' (Bodnar, ibid)

The following year (2008) saw the publication of a book to accompany a series of programmes broadcast by the state broadcaster RTE. *Our War: Ireland and the Great War*, edited by John Horne, was an explicit intervention in the discourse by the state and, like Dublin council's involvement in the promotion of Barry's novel, demonstrates that separating 'art' and 'politics' can only realistically be done for temporary and partial organisational reasons. The cover of the book features – only just emerging at the bottom – a green poppy. Within its pages are collected contributions on a range of different aspects of the 'Irish' experience of the war and also how that has been both remembered and forgotten since then. Barry is quoted on the cover describing it thus:

> This book is like an object pulled glittering not only from the muddy "Irish" trenches of long ago, but the deep black ditch of forgetfulness: a miracle.

The book's designers are not alone in attempting to create a more acceptable version of the poppy. In 2013 the Republic of Ireland section of the Royal British Legion 'approved the striking of a special Irish Poppy badge'. This features a red poppy imposed upon a larger green shamrock and with Kipling's *'Lest we Forget'* beneath. The Legion state that as well as calling attention to the particular sacrifice made by those from the island the 'distinctively Irish iconography will also allow the wearer to express their Irish identity, origin or descent wherever they may be.' They go on to explain:

> It is also hoped that this emblem will promote greater public awareness of the legitimacy of the Remembrance Poppy within an Irish context; particularly during this prelude to the centenary commemorations for the Great War in which so many men from all corners of Ireland served and died together. *(Royal British Legion Limerick, 2013)*

This one sentence concisely illustrates much of the contemporary interest in Remembrance on the island. It continues to be controversial and in need of 'promotion'; it is ostensibly at least partly aimed at bringing together those 'from all corners of the island' who 'served and died together'; and it has a particular resonance due to the arrival of the centenary of the war.

This combination of the poppy and the shamrock was on display when I visited Green Park CWGC cemetery near the shoreline battle sites of Gallipoli, Turkey, in 2010. The site had

recently been visited by a party including the President of Ireland, Mary McAleese, and an array of wreaths and other tributes lay against the Stone of Remembrance. Behind the President's wreath of laurels, already turning in the heat, was secreted a small plastic box. In it were four poppies and a metal shamrock badge. Such chaperoning of controversial symbols in order to make their presence acceptable could be seen in the entry into the Loyalist sacred space of The Diamond in 'Londonderry' of an Irish Tricolour. The flag has been carried in to the war memorial there as part of certain Remembrance ceremonies. Its contrast with the massed ranks of union flags was softened by the additional presence of the flags of Canada and New Zealand. It was also, like Maskey's gesture (see below), timed so as not to coincide with the main ceremony.

Parity of Esteem? The Balancing of Remembrance

In the Republic it is significant that much attention has also been paid in recent years to the memory of republican heroes, including state funerals for a group of disinterred executed 1916 rebels and a lavish state commemoration of the 90th anniversary of the Easter Rising. The staging of these events can be seen as being motivated not only by a desire to facilitate an inclusive range of commemorations but also with an eye to demonstrating the Fianna Fail government's (until their defeat in 2011) republican credentials in the face of the rise of Sinn Féin across the island.

These elaborate state ceremonies performed as part of the struggle for ownership of Republican memory also enabled perhaps the most explicit and startling challenge to the national ownership of Great War Remembrance. In the summer of 2006, invited members of Ian Paisley's hard line Democratic Unionist Party travelled south to Dublin to watch the President of the Republic of Ireland, as part of an elaborate full state ceremony, lay a laurel wreath, at Islandbridge, to the Irish who died fighting in the British Army, on the 90th anniversary of the first day of the Battle of the Somme. This act was matched, if not exceeded, during the state visit of Queen Elizabeth to Ireland in May 2011. Both heads of state laid wreaths to the dead at Islandbridge – the President's of laurels, the Queen's of poppies – but also laid laurel wreaths at the Garden of Remembrance in Parnell Square. This was created in 1966 to commemorate those who had died fighting for Irish freedom from British rule, and particularly those who had died in the 1916 uprising. With a simple

bowing of the head the Queen dramatically unsettled fixed oppositions (expressed to me in various interviews).

The opening of a garden of remembrance in the Republic, the Mayo Memorial Peace Park, by the President Mary McAleese in October 2008 commemorating not only those from the county who died fighting under the flag of the UN but also those killed whilst serving in the British Army was, likewise, counterbalanced a month later when Merrion Square finally became the site of a memorial to fallen soldiers – those who had served in the Irish Defence Force. Speaking at its unveiling by the President, Defence Minister Willie O'Dea's words held echoes of Kevin O'Higgins in the 1920s when he proudly declared:

> Now Ireland will have a permanent memorial in a prominent position in our nation's capital where we can all honour and remember those who gave their lives for Ireland and the global community. (*Irish Times*, 8th November 2008)

Despite such evidence to the contrary some Irish critics have perceived a growing and disturbing 'parity of esteem' of the dead. This term became central to the 'Peace Process' in the 1990s after the Opsahl Commission of 1992-93 (Hennessey and Wilson, 1997: 2). It describes an approach which attempts to value equally the 'culture' of 'both' 'communities' in the North. Critics of a perceived shift in commemorative practices on the island argue that commemoration of those who died as 'martyrs' to the nation in the conflict with the British is part of the rightful maintenance of the memory of the fight against oppression and imperialism. In contrast, they see the revival of Great War remembrance as part of a 're-Anglicization' or even re-colonisation of the island. When RTE presented a range of programmes commemorating the 90th anniversary of the Armistice their radio debates on the subject were memorable for the robust presentation of such 'Anti-Remembrance' arguments.   In the same week the Indymedia Ireland website contained many articles in a similar critical vein with one describing a Remembrance Concert, 'Period Dress (Optional)', in Cork City Hall as 'sing-along-a-slaughter' (www.indymedia.ie/article/89796).

The engagement by nationalists and republicans with Remembrance has been particularly controversial and has laid them open to strong criticism from their colleagues and others. In the summer of 2002 Sinn Féin councillor Alex Maskey became the first Republican Mayor of Belfast. The Unionists refused to work with him or to select one of their own as his Deputy. It was not a promising start. However, within a month attitudes towards him had shifted. He had earnt grudging praise from several old enemies for his decision to engage

with Remembrance. He and his colleagues determined that they wanted to show the Unionist population of Belfast what it would be like to live under an Irish government in a united Ireland (McCaffrey, 2003: 158). The dead of the Great War had been commemorated by the President of the Republic for many years by now and Maskey wished to show that in his role as the figurehead for the city he would represent all the people of the city and also engage with this practice.

The occasion was the anniversary of the first day of the battle of the Somme, 1st July, less than a month after his elevation to Mayor. He decided to lay a wreath at the Cenotaph two hours before the main ceremony at 11.00. The wreath would be of laurels rather than poppies. Poppies were seen as being too closely linked to British militarism. Accompanied by the other Sinn Féin councillors he duly carried out this ritual. Whilst some Unionists criticised the use of the laurel rather than poppy, and some rejected the gesture as an empty stunt, others saw it as 'significant'. Ulster Unionist Councillor Alan Crowe commented:

> The fact that it was a laurel wreath did cause offence in a lot of quarters […] But I think, on balance, people felt that at least it was a gesture and showed that the grassroots unionist opinion, which was saying that we had to move forward, were right in there assumption that here was a guy who was prepared to … make those gestures to show that they (republicans) were starting down that road (cited in McCaffrey, 2003: 164).

Maskey subsequently faced a great deal of criticism from within the Republican movement including his own party but his standing within the movement and support from other senior figures enabled him to survive (McCaffrey, 2003: 158-166). Critics from outside his party included Pat Muldowney of Foyle Labour Group who accused Sinn Féin and the nationalist SDLP of joining unionists in celebrating imperialism. He equated the Irish who had fought in the British Army with the Dutch and Bosnians who had later fought in the SS and, whilst allowing that many of them would have joined as a result of poverty or because duped by propaganda, believed that 'perhaps the kindest thing is to say as little as possible about them' (Sunday World 15.12.2002).

Parity of esteem went to a new level in 2016 with the unveiling of a 'Remembrance Wall' in Glasnevin Cemetery in Dublin, home to the graves of many of the Nationalist heroes of Ireland. Engraved upon it were the names of all who had died in the Easter Rising of a

hundred years earlier. The names were not arranged by category but by the chronology of their deaths and included, not uncontroversially, the names of the 'British' soldiers who had died trying to suppress it. Not merely inclusive commemorations but, in this instance, an inclusive memorial that made no distinction between 'them' and 'us'. As Orr observes (2016) this is a radically changed and more inclusive commemoration of 1916 than occurred in 1966 and it is clearly aimed at reconciliation across the island.

New Perspectives on the War

The opening up of Remembrance to a wider range of voices has also offered the opportunity to challenge the dominant discourse of Remembrance characterized by quiet pride and silent regret. Well known northern author and socialist Eamonn McCann makes use of this in his contribution to the collection *Remembrance*:

> When we think of the Somme, as we should every year, we should rage against those responsible for sending the young men of Ulster, and from all other corners of Ireland and Britain, out to die so uselessly, in such droves.(in Lucy & McClure, 1997: 128)

Some Republicans addressed the Great War in a way that bridged, and challenged, discourses by supporting the 'Shot at Dawn' campaign to achieve pardons for all the soldiers executed by the British Army during the Great War. The Irish group focused on those amongst the dead who were Irish born. Their non-poppy wreath was prominent at Islandbridge in November 2005 and the campaign achieved its aims a year later with the granting of a general Royal pardon. Belfast playwright Martin Lynch explores this aspect of the war, and rebuts the glorifying of military service, in his *Holding Hands at Paschendale* (2006) which brought the story to life on the Belfast stage.

Observing the effects, in the Republic, of official state involvement in Remembrance in the mid-1990s Jane Leonard had observed that:

> One of the ironies of Enniskillen has been that the bombing which aimed to obliterate those remembering in a northern Irish town subsequently propelled some southern towns into a cultural and practical reclamation of their own forgotten communities (1996: 110).

These 'forgotten communities', i.e. the southern unionists, have also been referred to, along with their northern brethren, by Irish state officials engaged in recent Great War commemoration. Yet it is not just these forgotten communities that are being remembered or have remembered. It is also the 'non-unionist', non-'Anglo-Irish' majority. The Great War, it has emerged, was not just a Unionist experience, not just a 'British' experience. It was an 'Irish' experience. The subsequent exploration of this raises questions that problematise the mythic identities tied to conceptualisations of the nation on the island and beyond.

Remembrance thus holds the potential to be a re-membering of the family, a re-membering of communities and a re-membering of the nation. This will involve changed conceptions of who is part of the nation and therefore inevitably of what is the nation. This, in turn, has implications for linked, often opposing discourses of Remembrance as Townshend (2006) warns in his work on Easter 1916. Reified readings of events are being undermined as discursive oppositions disintegrate in the light.

 A reaction to such an exploration and potential change can be observed in the Loyalist working class heartlands of urban Northern Ireland where Loyalists have redoubled their efforts to connect the events of the First World War, and particularly the Somme, to their community. On the Shankill Road, for instance, several new murals and a 'Garden of Reflection' have appeared in the last few years. The UVF is the main driver and beneficiary of these initiatives as their cause and that of the soldiers of the Great War becomes conflated by the content of these memorials. What this also works towards achieving is the renewal of the problematic nature of involvement in the rituals of Remembrance for non-Loyalists.

Summary:

Whilst Remembrance of the First World War was marginalised within the emerging Irish Republic, in the new statelet of Northern Ireland it quickly became a central element in the discursive construction of Protestant Unionist identity. A key factor in this was the role of 'Orangeism' in making sense of the loss of life and, in particular, the 'sacrifice of the Somme'. This weaving of Remembrance into the texts and practices of the Loyal Orders, which had played such a key role in the resistance to Home Rule and the subsequent partitioning of the island, worked to frame it as militantly Protestant and Unionist. This

militant Protestant Unionism had resulted in the construction of an oppressive 'Orange State' in which Roman Catholics were second-class citizens. The 'Orangeing' of Remembrance, therefore, and its close links with the organs of this state, effectively removed it from the normal experience of the Nationalist community in the north.

The coming of the 'Troubles' in the 1960s, and particularly 'Bloody Sunday' in 1972, alienated the Nationalist community in both polities even further from Remembrance of dead soldiers of the British Army. Conversely Loyalist fears of a British sell-out to Dublin at the time of the Anglo-Irish Agreement in 1985 intensified their association with and memorialising of their grandfathers' 'sacrifice' at the Somme. Thus Remembrance served as a key part of the construction of a discourse of division between the two communities on the island and particularly in the North.

Enniskillen marked both the zenith of such a logic and also thus the beginning of its demise. The reaction in the Republic, including amongst Republican supporters, and the focus on the story of the Irish in the Great War brought a renewed interest in and engagement with Remembrance. Knowledge of Irish involvement in the war is now much more widespread. Successive Presidents of the Republic have engaged regularly in Remembrance ceremonies and even Republican politicians have bowed their heads to war memorials. It can no longer be thought of as a purely Unionist, British, practice. This rediscovered story and the additional story of its 'forgetting' has provoked the interest of a range of storytellers on the island. Historians, both academic professionals and those without such a stamp of authority, playwrights, poets, novelists and broadcasters have all brought their imagination to bear in the exploration of this topic. For some, particularly the 'local' military historians and historian broadcasters like Dungan, it is an act of reclamation of neglected historical knowledge. For others it is another opportunity to explore the drama of life. And for a few, in particular writers like Barry and Lynch, it is an opportunity to explore the complex politics of the island both by attempting to enable us to live and think, for a few moments, within that elusive 'structure of feeling' that is the past and also by forcing us into an awareness of the politics of the 'past in the present'.

As well as its reappearance in stories Remembrance has been materialised in a range of monuments. The restoration of the National War Memorial at Islandbridge has provided an impressive venue for the re-engagement with Remembrance by politicians in the Republic. The construction of the memorial park in Mayo is significant in terms of both its inclusive nature and also its provincial setting. The 'neutrally' positioned Island of Ireland Peace Park

in Belgium, explored in more detail in the case study in chapter 9 analysing this monument, is an intervention in the discourse of Remembrance that has attempted to both make it an Irish 'memory' and also to shape that memory.

Such ventures, and the exhibition about the Royal Dublin Fusiliers in Dublin have been instigated by committed individuals and groups. In this controversial field they have 'put their head above the parapet' and, when it hasn't been shot off, have encouraged politicians to believe that such steps can be made without any political casualties. This has then led to funding and support.

The politicians themselves have also made various interventions in the discourse of Remembrance. For the Unionists in the North 'sincere' engagement with the rituals of Remembrance is one of the required performances of their credentials as fit members of their 'community'. The recognition by Republicans such as Maskey of the sanctity and centrality of Remembrance to the Unionists encouraged him in his determination to engage with it. In the process he gained the grudging respect of some of them and disruptively intervened in the discourses of division on the island.

Considering Maskey's action is also useful to us more generally because it illustrates the significance of 'apolitical' figureheads in the world of politics and conflict management. Maskey justified his wreath-laying to the very vocal critics within his own party, Sinn Fein, by arguing that, as the apolitical representative of all the people of Belfast in his role as Lord Mayor, he was obliged to perform this action on their behalf and that also, whilst doing so, he was acting not as a Republican politician but as the Mayor of Belfast.

The ultimate figureheads in this play of nations – the heads of state – have also been made use of by governments to perform hugely significant political acts. Acting as the representative of the 'whole nation' they have come together to use connections from the past to shape relations in the present. Emboldened by the perception of a positive public reaction to such steps the leaders of governments and their ministers have also engaged with both the rituals and texts of Remembrance but also, simultaneously and consequently, with the members of their population for whom such engagement sends a significant message.

Another type of actor has also had particular licence to take steps across the divide through the vehicle of Remembrance. Ex-paramilitaries occupy a very powerful position within the imaginary of 'their communities'. Their 'loyalty' to their community is unquestionable.

Many of them have lost decades of their lives incarcerated for the 'cause'. The involvement of these key figures in the 'Journey of Reconciliation' trips and similar joint ventures onto neutral ground has demonstrated the potential for this 'shared history' to be used to establish and expand perceived areas of commonality across political divides.

This exploration is on-going. Whilst some Nationalists have embraced this forgotten aspect of their 'community's' past others have criticised the revisionism that they see as working to rehabilitate the colonist and oppressor. Reaction within the Loyalist community has also been mixed with some encouraging this spreading of the ownership of this 'memory' whilst others have redoubled their efforts to place Remembrance of the war at the heart of their proclaimed identity. In subsequent chapters I hope to chart and analyse some of these initiatives, their place in the lives of their instigators and the 'communities' they inhabit, and to try and understand the significance of these interventions in the construction of identity in Belfast.

Chapter 6 The Art of Memory: Remembrance and Collective Memory in Northern Ireland

'Collective' memory, like all knowledge, is socially constructed, validated and mediated. As such it can be usefully analysed as an example of what Michel Foucault (1972) described as a 'discourse' and the processes by which this 'discursive formation' comes to be produced, shaped, maintained and challenged can be understood as examples of 'discursive construction'.

As Rebecca Graff-McRae (2010) states, at the start of her analysis of the ways in which the events of 1916 are commemorated in Ireland, memory needs to be read as discourse 'that is as an inherently political interaction between socially constructed relations of power which reflect and reproduce contested positions and meanings.' (p11). Reading memory as discourse encourages us to look at particular functions relating to power, knowledge and subjectivity. It also points us towards the study of the texts and practices that 'carry' the discourse and also of the institutions that organise, distribute and police these texts and practices.

In the case of Remembrance in Belfast of the First World War these texts include: war memorials; memorials to paramilitaries; street murals; commemorative wreaths, their contents and their inscription; commemorative symbols worn on the lapel; popular songs, poems, books, plays, films, and television programmes; painting and sculpture; graffiti; newspaper, radio and television news reporting; and academic publications. The practices include: national, regional, city, and community Remembrance ceremonies; Orange Parades; the wearing of symbols; the construction of monuments, murals, films, academic publications etc.; and the placing of symbols within the landscape. A wide range of institutions are engaged with the organisation, production, distribution, maintenance, shaping, policing and challenging of these texts and practices. Those I am particularly focusing on here are: national governments; city councils; political parties in Ireland; the Loyal Orange Institution; the main paramilitary groups of The Troubles period - the Provisional Irish Republican Army (PIRA), Ulster Defence Association (UDA), but particularly the Ulster Volunteer Force (UVF); the Roman Catholic Church; various Protestant churches; the British Army; and the Royal British Legion.

These particular institutions are centrally involved in the discourse of Remembrance through their application of power. Each has power in relation to the shaping of the norms

and values of particular groups in society. The ways in which they organise, shape and challenge Remembrance influence these groups. The Royal British Legion is the charity that supports ex-military personnel. They raise funds through the sale of artificial poppies which are then worn on the lapel as one of the most ubiquitous texts of Remembrance in the UK. They play a major role in shaping the meaning of Remembrance through their marketing of the 'Poppy Appeal': for example 'Wear your Poppy to show your support for our troops in Afghanistan' (heard by the author on Classic FM 8th November 2001). The actions of the British Army – their deployment and behaviour – also shapes Remembrance because of its power to shape the meaning of the figure being honoured – the 'British Soldier'. The texts produced by Republican groups such as the IRA and Eirigi also work in this discursive construction and the aspects they work to remind their readers of do not, needless to say, present the 'British Soldier' as an honourable figure. Paramilitary groups 'on the other side', such as the UVF and UDA, also shape the meaning of Remembrance through their use of the texts of Remembrance in memorials to their members. This is particularly the case with the UVF due to its 1913-established namesake's enlistment into the British Army as the 36th (Ulster) Division. The prominence given to Remembrance within the texts and practices of the various churches also helps to shape their congregations' understanding of and connection with Remembrance.

What I hope to start to demonstrate in this chapter is the ways in which the texts and practices of Remembrance, as shaped by these institutions, work intertextually to support and shape particular relations of power, domains of knowledge and forms of subjectivity.

Where Foucault speaks of texts and practices in discourse, Jeffrey Olick (2010) refers to *mnemonic products and practices* when exploring the workings of collective memory. For him, a focus on the 'material' of memory encourages an elision of the debate concerning the role of the individual and the collective in memory. He suggests that it is useful to maintain use of the term 'collective memory' even if it is problematic because it is a useful 'sensitizing umbrella' that alerts us to the role, however conceptualised, of the collective, however conceptualised, in all memories. He explains that:

> Mnemonic practices – though occurring in an infinity of contexts and through a shifting multiplicity of media – are always simultaneously individual and social. And no matter how concrete mnemonic products may be, they gain their reality only by being used, interpreted, and reproduced or changed. To focus on collective memory as a variety of products and practices is thus to reframe the antagonism

between individualist and collectivist approaches to memory more productively as a matter of moments in a dynamic process. (2010: 158)

He also points to Halbwach's argument that:

All individual remembering, that is, takes place with social materials, within social contexts, and in response to social cues. Even when we do it alone, we do so as social beings with reference to our social identities. (ibid: 156. Citing Halbwachs 1992 [1934]: 38)

Here again we can see connections with the workings of discourse as argued by Foucault and in particular his conceptualisation of 'discipline' and 'surveillance' (1995). Discourses circulating in society and learnt by each of us lead us to act in ways that take into account the norms and values reproduced by these discourses. We learn to discipline ourselves in line with these norms and are encouraged to do so by our awareness of the surveillance we are under. This applies not only when in public view but even when on our own. The normative surveillance of others is internalised and trained upon ourselves. Our actions and even thoughts take place in socialised space. Thus do discourses work upon the body. I shall now explore how the ways in which practices of memory have been theorised can help to explain the process of the construction and distribution of the discourse of Remembrance in Northern Ireland.

Practices

Halbwachs believed that memory practices in the form of commemorative gatherings enabled the imaginative re-enactment of a past 'that would otherwise slowly disappear in the haze of time' (Coser's introduction to Halbwachs: 1992: 24). Connerton (1989) argued that such ceremonies sustained memory through the process of the participants learning, through repetition, the bodily movements required of each 'performer'. This 'habitual memory' would become 'sedimented in the body' (p102). This incorporated memory can certainly be observed at any Remembrance ceremony. The particular posture of key participants is surrounded by another, less obvious but still formal, type of posture displayed by the crowd. Likewise the walking style, physical restraint and lack of facial interaction. Thus everyone plays their part. Even the little children untutored, unhabituated, in this ritual play their part through an unwitting display of carefree

innocence that, in this context, and contrasted with the physical behaviour of everyone else, acquires additional meaning and begs to be read as poignant.

In putting forward this theory Connerton is developing Roger Bastide's (1960) work on religions. Bastide distinguishes between 'motor' and 'intellectual' memories and argues that the former are less easily forgotten and the latter survive best when connected to them (2011 [1960]:158). When looking at rituals he follows Durkheim (1915) who saw rites as sustaining the beliefs common to the group and also the group's sense of group unity and shared identity (p376). Connerton agrees and states that: 'a ritual is not a journal or memoir. Its master narrative is more than a story told and reflected on: it is the cult enacted' (op cit: 70). Bastide, in developing a structuralist analysis of his case study, goes on to set out how he believes the rituals to be carefully structured in terms of the varying roles of different groups of participants and that this has the function of not only making clear who is a member of the group but also the hierarchical and functional position they hold within it. 'The ceremony is the image of the group and thus is structured like the group.' (Bastide op cit: 160). This functions to publically reinforce and reproduce that structure.

This representation of membership and 'office' can certainly be discerned in the rituals of Remembrance in Northern Ireland. The ceremony is attended by every sector of Protestant, Unionist and establishment society from the Boys Brigade to the Ulster Unionist Party, the Prison Service to the British Army, the Orange Order to the Women's Institute. Distinct roles give precedence to certain individuals – Lord Lieutenant, First Minister, Worshipful Master of the Regional Orange Lodge – and certain groups – the British Army band, City councillors, ex-servicemen. The attendance in recent years of a slightly wider range of the population is reflected in the range of religions whose ministers are in attendance. The service is led, however, by a Protestant minister thus demonstrating their hierarchical position within the UK state.

Before moving on to look at some of the ways in which texts are seen to function within memory it is necessary to acknowledge that the distinction between these two categories – practices and texts – is one that mainly serves an analytical function. From a poststructuralist perspective texts only take on meaning when mobilised in some form of practice including their 'reading' by those that encounter them. Thus all the texts I am focusing on here are made meaningful, at different times, in different places, by different people and with different outcomes. Ann Rigney (2010) uses Jan Assman's term 'figures of

memory' to refer to symbolic elements that are selected to 'provide a placeholder for the exchange and transfer of memories' and explains that 'it is only through the mediation of cultural practices that figures of memory can acquire shape, meaning, and a high public profile within particular communities' (p345). Conversely many texts provide encouragement to practices, suggestions as to form and resources for possible contents. As historian David Fitzpatrick, one of the first to resurrect the story of Irish involvement in the Great War, observes:

> There are close parallels and multiple connections between ceremonial and literary commemoration. Popular histories, biographies and almanacs, along with school text-books, familiarised readers with a judicious selection of names, events and precise dates, supplying essential preparation for associated ceremonies.' (2001: 185)

Such texts come to form what Alieda Assman terms the 'canon' and defines as the 'actively circulated memory' of a society which preserves the past as present i.e. relevant and important to now (2010: 98). The process of 'canonization' is, of course, itself a practice, influenced by, reflecting, and shaping relations of power. Thus texts and practices continually inform each other. And hence, the arbitrary nature of this section break…

Texts

Assman also considers the texts that do not form part of the 'actively circulated memory' of the canon but rather what she describes as the 'passively stored memory' of the archive which preserves the past as past (ibid). She cites Jakob Burckhardt's dividing of the 'remains' of the past into 'messages' and 'traces':

> 'By "messages" he meant texts and monuments that were addressed to posterity, whereas "traces" carry no similar address. […] The unintentional traces […] he cherished as unmediated testimonies of a former era that can tell a counter-history to the one propagated by the rulers.' (ibid: 98-99)

It is in the 'archive' of what Assman terms cultural memory that these traces are preserved. Here we see another encouragement to historians – Burke's 'guardians of awkward facts: the skeletons in the cupboard of social memory' (2011: 192). Such traces, however, are stored by a much wider range of guardians in a plethora of cupboards. With regard to

Remembrance in Ireland it is not only the official archives of state organisations and other record-keeping bodies that have been mined by historians such as Fitzpatrick, Leonard, Jeffrey and others that have contained the resources to challenge the dominant narrative of the politics of Ireland's engagement with the Great War. These are also preserved in the homes of many of the population. A typical example of this was given to me during an interview with a visitor to the National War Memorial at Islandbridge. She recounted how she had always known about her great-uncle who had fought and died with the Irish Republican Army against the British in the Anglo-Irish War. His picture was framed and hung on the wall of the living room in her parents' home. Only recently had she learnt of this man's brother who had died fighting in, rather than against, the British Army in France. She had been shown his picture which for decades had lain at the bottom of a drawer. There he was, one of those doomed young boys trying to look like men in their new uniform. The rebel's photo was a text that had been canonized: it accorded with the dominant discourse about Irish patriotism. It had been selected and exhibited. It became the inspiration for stories that reproduced this narrative and connected it to the family. The photo no doubt also became the focus for minor acts of commemoration on key national and familial days of remembrance. It reproduced the family memory in a particular shape that enabled it to fit most comfortably with the collective memory. Meanwhile, the photographic evidence of the 'awkward fact' of the other ghost was not destroyed but hidden away in the 'archive' of the bottom drawer.

As Assman points out the canon and the archive are not 'closed against each other' and allow for 'mutual influx and reshuffling': 'This accounts for the dynamics within cultural memory and keeps it open to changes and negotiations; (op cit: 106). These could take the form of changes in circumstance and changes in meaning and the two are usually connected. When 'the time was right' the photo was brought out. The young man's story was told to the family and it was agreed to display his picture next to his brother. Now his great-niece was setting out to find out more about this part of 'her' past. What is of interest to all who would understand and potentially intervene in the workings of collective memory is what makes the time 'right' for such a change? This involves a more detailed exploration of relations of power and this will be returned to later in this chapter.

Another example would be the place where this interview occurred, Islandbridge itself. The national war memorial can be read as a text that was not selected for the canon. It was hidden away on the outskirts of the city and left to moulder. When 'times changed' it was

cleaned up and placed back in the public eye through ministerial attendance at Remembrance ceremonies. This example also illustrates the argument that 'there are as many collective memories as there are groups and institutions in society' (Coser, 1992: 22). Remembrance texts and practices had not vanished from the Republic. They had retreated to the semi-private spaces of the Protestant minority. This could be interpreted as a third category, perhaps the 'shrine' – actively archived memory. When mainstream society was encouraged to revisit these texts and practices this 'shrine' provided the safely curated resources with which to do so. St. Patrick's Church of Ireland Cathedral in Dublin could also be placed in this category. It is packed with texts that speak of an enthusiastic Irish 'Unionist' involvement in the colonising adventures of the British Empire. As Leersen (2001: 207) observes it functions as an example of Nietzsche's 'monumental' history: a record of the heroic deeds of great men (and the woman who ruled them…)

In Northern Ireland multiple collectives are demonstrated by the centrality of the canonical texts of Remembrance for the 'Unionist collective' and the existence, until very recently, of only traces of connection with the Great War for the 'Nationalist collective'. In the aftermath of the war, memorials were erected throughout Belfast. Let us consider two. Both were constructed as 'messages' but one became a silent 'trace'. The first is the memorial at the summit of Dundonald Cemetery, on the Upper Newtownards Road in Unionist East Belfast (Fig.2), which has been the focus for practices of Remembrance ever since. Crowds parade to it, wreaths are laid by it and its environs are tended carefully and appear to be respected even by the bored youths haunting them on summer's evenings.

Fig.2. Cross of Sacrifice Great War memorial, Dundonald Cemetery, East Belfast. November 2011. © John Poulter

The second is the one sitting anonymously in Milltown Cemetery, on the Falls Road in Nationalist West Belfast which was, when I first visited it in 2009, looking neglected: dirty, with wheelie bins (dumpsters) placed next to it and graffiti scratched into it. It hadn't been blown up, as many have, or more than half-heartedly damaged. Koselleck (2011: 370)

explains such a survival by arguing that memorials are only dismantled when seen as a threat whereas this anomalous marker would have been seen, on the staunchly Republican Falls, as an irrelevance. This memorial is dealt with in more detail in chapter 8.

A few streets away, on the Loyalist Shankill Road, memorials 'to the Great War', in the form of monuments, street murals and flags are everywhere. In fact these *lieux de mémoire* (Nora), and the texts commemorating republicans in other parts of Belfast, are so ubiquitous that Edna Longley argues that Nora's term can be used to 'denote not only particular monuments or numinous places, but territories marked inwardly by communal mediations of history, outwardly by insignia and ritual' (2001: 223). She believes that 'a toxic point has been reached' when 'a whole (i.e. fragmented) society' has been turned into a *lieu de mémoire*. (ibid: 224). I would suggest that the situation in Belfast in fact challenges Nora's argument that lieux de mémoire have replaced the no longer existent *milieux de mémoire*. Much of Belfast could be argued to inhabit just such a milieu.

Meaning

In order to explore the question of the meaning of Remembrance texts I shall first look at war memorials. What are memorials to the Great War actually commemorating? Particular deaths in a particular conflict. Beyond that? The reason for those deaths and that conflict? As Jeffrey points out the inscriptions on Great War memorials in Ireland present a variety of reasons. The men, and occasional woman, 'being remembered' are, on some, stated to have died: 'for Ireland', or, less specifically, 'for their country'. On others the reason given demonstrates the problem with such claims and addresses the republican critiques: 'died for the freedom of small nations'. Some avoid all such hostages to fortune by simply stating that the memorial commemorates those 'who laid down their lives'. The war memorial in Coleraine is an example of the last type. At its unveiling James Craig, the Prime Minister of the newly created Northern Ireland, stated that: 'those who have passed away have left behind a great message … to stand firm and to give away none of Ulster's soil' (2013: 119) Thus, for those who heard and agreed with his words the memorial took on the meaning of an example and encouragement to defend the Unionist status of the new statelet.

These examples illustrate Rigney's observation that 'it is only through the mediation of cultural practices that figures of memory can acquire shape, meaning and a high public profile within particular communities' (2010: 345). This mediation is not a one-off event but

an ongoing process. The same meaning could be reproduced and thus maintained but it is also possible, and likely, that the text will take on a new meaning as its use is adapted to suit the purposes of particular groups in the present. For Nora, this is what makes such *lieux de mémoire* so interesting.

> For although it is true that the fundamental purpose of a *lieu de mémoire* is to stop time, to inhibit forgetting, to fix a state of things, to immortalize death, and to materialize the immaterial […] it is also clear that *lieux de mémoire* thrive only because of their capacity for change, their ability to resurrect old meanings and generate new ones along with new and unforeseeable connections (1996b: 15).

Thus we need to analyse the different ways in which such memorials have had their meaning shaped by different actors, at different times in different places. Firstly, like similar memorials throughout the UK and elsewhere, they have been used to commemorate those who have died fighting in subsequent conflicts. Most of them had additional inscriptions or plaques added to mark the Second World War. Many of those attending ceremonies at them would also have been commemorating this new war. Secondly, in Northern Ireland they continued to be linked to maintenance of the Union and protection of the statelet. Attendance at Remembrance ceremonies became more and more a demonstration of Unionism and Loyalism. In the Republic, Heather Jones argues that over the last century the meaning of Remembrance has 'evolved'. What was initially, in the newly-created Free State, 'something subversive [i.e. Unionist] that lamented the old regime' developed into 'a rather benign anti-war ritual that affirmed a plural sense of identity'. By the 1980s she believes that it had 'lost all connection with unionism, thereby providing a different model of Irish Protestant commemoration that contrasted with the Northern unionist version.' (2013: 77) She goes on to state that at the time of writing 'commemoration of the Great War in the Republic had become interdenominational; the poppy no longer makes us 'different'.' (ibid: 81). Such a claim, whilst stemming from some definite shifts in recent years, still reads, for this observer, as aspirational and calls into question her previous confidence in the demise of unionist overtones to Remembrance in the South.

This illustrates another problem we need to grapple with in trying to usefully explore the meaning of any signifying practice whether as ritual, materialised in a memorial or the interaction of the two. Whose meaning? Jones and her co-religionists in the Church of Ireland may sincerely believe that their Remembrance practices and symbols are devoid of

unionist meaning but the continuing political controversy surrounding the wearing of the poppy suggests that many in the rest of the population would disagree. Thus, for Jones, the poppy she wears has one meaning, for those she passes in the street it has a range of different meanings. And in the Republic a large element of many of those readings will be unionism. This illustrates Barthes' argument about 'the death of the author' (1977). The production of meaning does not stop when the 'author' ceases typing or the mason finishes the engraving. Every subsequent reader will interpret the meaning of the text in front of them with reference to both the events that have transpired since its production, particularly recent events, and also their own perspectives on the issues addressed by the text. Thus meaning is contingent.

Meaning also isn't brought into being from nothing at the moment the typing/engraving starts. All signifying practice utilises signs – words, poppies, silence – that already carry an array of meanings. Thus the 'author' of any text is always quoting, alluding, inferring, being poetic, playful, controversial, naïve, radical, etc. Sometimes deliberately. Thus meaning is produced within the chaos of intertextuality.

To add an additional layer of complexity, both the 'author' and 'reader' are also brought into existence as the people they are, at that moment, by the text. Texts of Remembrance will variously mobilise discourses of Remembrance, patriotism, loss, masculinity, militarism, post-colonialism, etc. etc. These will have different power depending on the context of reception: influenced by the setting, others present, recent events etc. These discourses will combine, separate, re-combine etc. – cutting across each other, working in combination – in response to other texts and the textualisation, through mediation, of events. The subject positions we take up in relation to these discourses constitute us for that moment in that place. We are constituted in the moment of making sense. This perspective can also be used to explain collective memory. As Olick argues, the group as well as the individual are 'both constituted by re-membering' (2011: 227). I would argue, therefore, that the concept of collective memory can be usefully understood as both a carrier and product of discourse. And the meanings it carries are produced through symbolic work that shapes the perceptions of the members of the group and identifies them to themselves, each other and their 'Others' as members of the collective. How should we conceptualise the extent to which this meaning is consistent, or malleable? Olick argues that whilst:

> [T]he concept of collective memory often encourages us to see memory either as an authentic residue of the past or as an entirely malleable construction in the present. […] Neither of these views, however, is a particularly insightful way to understand the complexities of remembering, which is always a fluid negotiation between the desires of the present and the legacies of the past. (2010: 159)

Whilst agreeing with the latter half of this statement I would take issue with the implicit suggestion that collective memory cannot be 'an entirely malleable construction in the present'. 'The legacies of the past' are chosen, validated and given meaning in the present. It may well be easier to shape a discourse of, for example, 'the nation' using elements that have already become part of the collective memory of the narrative of the nation but, given enough work and enough power, the discourse can be shaped to give completely new meanings to existing traces and wed these to 'new' symbolic material that is remade to fit the discourse. Those traces in the archive – Burke's awkward facts – will either be dismissed as fakes, deemed interesting but anomalous and thus not forming the persuasive basis of a challenge to the dominant narrative, or, mostly, kept hidden, until 'the time is right'.

If this approach stressing the power of institutions to shape meaning can be seen to stem from the insights of Michel Foucault the question provoked by the theories of Jacques Derrida is 'What meaning?' Not only is meaning of a memorial open to endless change, impossible to pin down, always on the move, so too is it also, right here, right now, impossible to describe with absolute precision. We attempt this through language and this tool is always working through comparison and evaluation rather than definition. Every part of any description we could give of the cross in Milltown would rely on the web of oppositions that give meaning to any sign e.g. word. Ultimately this would leave us with an increasingly narrowly defined list of what it wasn't from which we would be expected to create the meaning of what it was.

Whilst critics of Derrida would, even if agreeing with the theory, question the usefulness of such insights, I believe that they are particularly helpful in alerting us to the potential for ripples of change in the meanings of texts and practices within and across categories due to their interconnectedness at the level of the signifying practice of meaning construction. They also enable us to understand the fluidity of such meanings and encourage us to identify strategies at work in attempts to fix them.

The Meaning of the Great War: Intertextuality and Institutions

Not only are the meanings of symbols of Remembrance up for grabs but so too, as we have seen, is the meaning of the Great War itself. Eksteins, in *Rites of Spring: The Great War and the birth of the modern age*, argues that:

> The "real war" had ceased to exist in 1918. Thereafter it was swallowed by imagination in the guise of memory. For many the war became absurd in retrospect, not because of the war experience in itself but because of the postwar experience to justify the war. (1989: 297)

If the attempts to justify the war looked absurd from the English Home Counties how would they have looked from the backstreets of Limerick or the Falls Road?! Eksteins' insight that the war was transformed retrospectively can be used to explain the resurgence of emphasis on Remembrance and the Somme displayed in the signifying practice of Unionist groups after the Anglo-Irish Agreement of 1985. What so many 'Loyalists' had died for in 1916 had to be re-questioned. The meaning of their deaths – previously seen as defending the Crown, the Empire and the Union – was challenged by the representatives of that Crown apparently starting the dissolution of that Union. 'The Somme' now took on a new significance in the texts and practices of Remembrance for the Unionists. It was still a reminder of Loyal sacrifice to the Crown but now this was overlaid with an accusation that this loyalty was unreciprocated.

Paul Fussell, in *The Great War and Modern Memory* (2000 [1975]), puts forward a detailed argument for not only seeing the war as being shaped by subsequent representations but also the post-war British imagination, particularly as visible in literature, being shaped by the war. He explores not only literature and poetry but also general vocabulary, styles of speech and common perspectives on life and the world. Throughout, he demonstrates connections between the war experience and post-war thinking. He argues, convincingly, that 'memory' of the Great War pervades our thinking, our expression and culture. As such, he is arguing for the existence of what Nora later termed a *milieu de mémoire* but which Nora argued no longer existed. If we follow Fussell's line, and when looking at Belfast there is even more encouragement to do so, we can see Remembrance seeping into the entire culture.

Identifying a particularity to the meaning of Remembrance local to Northern Ireland is also encouraged by another key part of Fussell's analysis. He, once again convincingly, puts

forward the argument that not only was the Great War mediated by texts and practices after the war but also that the actual experience of the war and the meaning it had, at the time, for all concerned including the combatants, was shaped by the influence of already existing texts familiar to the population. Fussell focuses on the popular literature he argues was familiar to many in the trenches. He particularly focuses on Victorian romance, Bunyan's *Pilgrim's Progress*, and the *Oxford Book of Verse* (p125). He argues that the soldiers made sense of their experiences through reference to such texts. This comes across in the ways in which they describe their experience in their letters, diaries and other documents. In this way their experience of the war is 'premediated' to use Astrid Erll's term (2010: 392). In the case of Northern Ireland's Unionist soldiers these texts were no doubt also familiar but so were narratives dealing with the history of the Unionist population in the North. The annual rituals commemorating the Siege of Derry and the Battle of the Boyne would have provided schemata through which to make sense of the Somme and the rest of the war. It is no surprise to see the Somme quickly being woven into Orange mythology and for the story of the 36th Division advancing into no-man's-land wearing their Orange collarettes and crying 'No Surrender!' to be enthusiastically taken up within the collective memory. This produces a sense of continuity out of rupture, restates group identity and provides the 'sacrificial' motif that encourages ongoing commitment to the group or 'nation'.

Tracing intertextuality of this sort has been a large part of this study of Remembrance in Belfast. Lachmann defines intertextuality as the 'interchange and contact, formal and semantic, between texts'. She sees this as enabling 'transindividual remembering' an accumulation of texts, ideas, forms, that enables a culture to persist whilst also being constantly redefined. (2010: 301) This is how Remembrance persists and is redefined: through the linking, juxtaposing and blending of texts. These can be the transposing of a name from a battlefield to a sports ground. In England the battle of Spion Kop during the Boer War resulted in the banking, and later terraces of many football grounds becoming known as the Kop. In Ireland the Irish soldiers fighting in Gallipoli in 1915 brought home 'Hill 60' and this name was given to the banking at Croke Park in Dublin. However, this was soon changed to 'Hill 16' as the political situation changed after the Rising and a different group of warriors was given the respect devolving from such an association. (Ward, 2013: 35) Thus the meaning of Gallipoli, the Easter Rising, Croke Park, Gaelic games generally, and Dublin was redefined as these connections were made, changed and endured. The initial linking joined 'service in the British Army at Gallipoli' with the home of the Gaelic

Athletics Association (GAA) one of the premier organisations driving forward Irish cultural nationalism. The fact that the organisation banned members of the British forces from membership and also banned its members from attending any social event organised by the military (Moore, 2012: 45) demonstrates the significance of this naming. Such a linking was an illustration of the potential, at that moment, for service in the British Army to be seen as compatible with Irish nationalism. This was at the height of 'constitutional nationalism' and 'Empire patriotism'. The change to 'Hill 16' supplants the 'heroism' of Gallipoli with that of the Easter Rising. It also reaffirms the antipathy towards the British military and connects the venue, the GAA, cultural nationalism generally and the city of Dublin with Republicanism.

In Belfast the linking that has probably done most to shift the meaning of Remembrance for many in the 'Nationalist community' is that of the Great War soldier and the Loyalist paramilitary of seventy years later. These appear together on murals, the most well-known being on Glenwood Street off the Shankill Road (Fig.12) where they are accompanied by a lone piper on the horizon as they bow their heads to a row of headstones. Poppies abound. Elsewhere the connection is less strenuously made but texts of Remembrance are combined with murals commemorating Loyalist, and particularly UVF, gunmen. 'Lest we Forget', 'We will Remember them', 'In Remembrance', 'In Memory of Ulster's Fallen', 'They shall grow not old as we that are left grow old', 'Here Lies a Soldier'. Poppy wreaths are placed at these memorials thus changing the meaning of the poppy from a Remembrance of British Army dead to also include Loyalist paramilitaries. For Republican groups such as Eirigi there is little difference in practice, or reality, between the two categories and their mural just off the Falls Road presents the poppy dripping with blood, surrounded by the names of countries Britain has invaded and topped off with a skull (see Fig.113, p270).

As these two examples show, the power to significantly shape the discourse of Remembrance resides in the hands of certain groups within society. These can be understood as the 'institutions' that Foucault saw as the prime organisers, validators, distributors and guardians of discourses. In the streets of working class areas of Belfast such agency is possessed by the paramilitary groups and their associated political parties who control and sponsor most of the murals and memorials. However, national government, through various funds, also carries influence here and many a masked gunman has been replaced by a solemn memorial with the encouragement of a grant aimed at 'Peace and Reconciliation'. Funding for building projects has given government

another lever to commission murals on the hoardings that combine symbols normally never seen together due to their centrality to Loyalists and Republicans respectively. Such an example was the poppies and lilies surrounding Culturlann on the Falls Road during its renovation. This was a text that combined several 'shocking' signs. 'Shocking' in the sense that their location on a mural in this part of town caused me to feel seriously disorientated when I first 'thought' I had seen them. This is a classic example of a discursive intervention that attempts to radically unsettle fixed knowledge. Meanwhile, Sinn Fein's mural just up the road encouraged passers-by to 'Remember Ireland's Patriot Dead: Wear your Easter Lily with Pride'. The Eirigi mural of the poppy dripping blood, mentioned above, goes further – and presents their claim that they, rather than Sinn Féin, are the natural political home of true Republicans. Thus are interlinked discourses negotiated.

Other institutions prominent in the shaping of the discourse of Remembrance include local government, the churches, the various branches of the media, academia, the Orange Order, the Royal British Legion, regimental associations, and the British Army. These often work together. Official Remembrance ceremonies are organised by the British Legion, permitted and facilitated by local and national government and their police, prominently feature performances by military bands, wreath-laying by representatives of regimental associations and an array of 'civic society' organisations such as the fire service, the Women's Institute and the Boys Brigade. In Northern Ireland, in particular, these organisations include the Orange Order. Their presence plays its part in shaping the meaning of the event. So too does the recent presence at the Belfast cenotaph of Republican mayors. The ceremony becomes a 'service', and takes on the special significance of such a category of event, through the leading role played by religious leaders. In particular the Church of Ireland minister who leads the service and the prayers it contains. As Warner has observed in his research on Memorial Day ceremonies in the USA, the church has a particular power in shaping the meaning of the event and of the events it commemorates.

> The Memorial Day rite is a cult of the dead but not just of the dead as such, since by symbolically elaborating sacrifice of human life for the country through, or identifying it with, the Christian Church's sacred sacrifice of the incarnate God, the deaths of such men also become powerful sacred symbols which organize, direct, and constantly revive the collective ideals of the community and the nation...'
> (2011: 164)

Thus the power of the church to validate the morality of events is added to here with the power, using their central myths, to construct the deaths of young men as voluntary sacred sacrifices rather than, for example, as examples of callous exploitation.

The media are, because of their reach, also particularly influential. This is most clearly the case in relation to popular fictional texts. As the historian Brian Hanley observes, most of what he knew about the Great War he learnt from popular culture – comics, films, television and songs (2013: 108). The power of imaginative texts to attract, hold and influence the 'reader' is argued by many writers on memory (e.g. Eksteins, Pine, Rigney, op cit). An example of this is the popular novels of Sebastian Barry which have, over the last ten years, brought to life the complexities of Ireland at the time of the Great War and the legacy of that situation for one family. He drew on the work of pioneering academic historians such as David Fitzpatrick, Jane Leonard and Keith Jeffery (conversation with the author, June 2007) and reached an audience hugely larger than they could ever hope to. Dublin City Council then chose his book *A Long, Long Way* (2005) as their 'One Book, One City' choice for a month. The academics had mined the 'archive' and presented these traces for others to work upon creatively and promotionally.

Tom Burke, the founder of the Royal Dublin Fusiliers and a very influential actor in the changed relationship between nationalist Ireland and Remembrance, was also given encouragement and support by Dublin City Council, who provided a venue for his exhibition, and the Irish Government with ministerial attendance at the opening and ongoing support over the next few years (Burke, 2013: 104). This illustrates the ways in which government at both a local and national level can work to facilitate change through the work of other non-governmental organisations. Both Barry and Burke have since recounted how engagement with this story had made them nervous. Barry worried about letting the world know about his Police Chief grandfather: 'no cosy name around the fire of family. But a demon, a dark force, a figure to bring you literary ruin. What price my credentials as a real Irish writer…' (cited in Boyce, 2001: 264) Burke was more concerned about a knock on the door one night from one of 'the boys' (interview with author). For him, the paramilitary ceasefires were the signal that 'the time was right'. This shows another form of agency in the structuring of discourses – the power to inflict, and convincingly threaten to inflict, violence.

Barry's fears of literary ruin also point to another source of narratives that intervene in the discourse – those with a commercial interest in selling the story. Various forms of popular

culture have already been mentioned but, with the ceasefires holding, another group had the incentive to broadcast their stories about Northern Ireland – the tourism industry. Boyce gives details of the ways in which contemporary tourist attractions in the area aim to stress a 'shared history': an easily understood 'national story'. This widens their potential client base in the region and also works to counter the conflict-ridden image of the North (ibid: 269). Constructing such stories necessarily involves some measure of that other key element of 'collective memory' – 'forgetting'.

This aspect of memory work has been a key focus of much of the research into collective memory of the last few decades. Those interested in the role memory plays in the construction of nation are encouraged in this focus by Renan's oft-quoted observation that for the creation of a nation forgetting was at least as important as remembering (1994 [1882]: 17). Indeed, when looking at the Irish case we are presented with a good example of the messy birth of the nation featuring: separation from the colonial power; continuing presence of 'the coloniser', in the person of the 'Anglo-Irish' or 'West Britons' in the Free State and the Unionists in the North; the partition of the area claimed by Irish nationalists resulting in only partial 'liberation' and therefore argument about the completion of the national project and the need for ongoing 'liberation struggles'; the bitterness and division arising out of the most violent aspect of this argument – the Civil War – in which more 'Irish patriots' were killed by their fellows than had been killed by the colonising Brits in the War of Independence. In this context it can be seen that the question of how to commemorate the deaths of approximately thirty-five thousand men who had died in the uniform of the British during the Great War was only one of several awkward aspects of the past that might, from the perspective of those attempting to build the new nation, most usefully be forgotten.

Alieda Assman identifies two types of 'forgetting'. 'Active' involves trashing and erasing and the establishment of taboo elements of the past whereas 'passive' includes the neglecting, losing and abandoning of elements of the past. Much of the past is inevitably neglected, allowed to slip away. We cannot carry too heavy a load of memory. What much work on memory has been exploring in recent years often asks, however, is how much of what was 'allowed' to be forgotten was, in fact, actively encouraged to be forgotten? Why was this? What purpose, and whose interests, did it serve? Can a 'reclamation' or 'rediscovery' – a 'remembering' – of that past now have some egalitarian, liberating, cathartic effect? This is certainly how Tom Burke of the RDFA sees his work. He relates regular meetings with old

men thanking him for making them feel able to acknowledge their long-dead fathers. It is also an aspect identified as important by Jane Leonard in her writings on the 'Southern Unionists' and Remembrance. Both of these examples deal with what Peter Burke distinguished from official censorship of the historical record – 'unofficial suppression or repression'. He called for exploration of this 'social organisation of forgetting' (2011 [1989]: 191-192). This view of the shaping of collective memory challenges Halbwachs' belief that collective memories don't change, collectives do: and what appears to be a shift in the collective memory should, therefore, more accurately be seen as a shift in the makeup and character of the collective. Jan Assman sees Nietzsche's observations in the *Genealogy of Morality* as useful here. He argues that 'assimilation, the transition from one group into another one, is usually accompanied by an imperative to forget the memories connected with the original identity' (2011: 114). This could usefully be applied to the way in which the ex-servicemen and their families in Ireland, in order to assimilate into the new grouping of 'Irish', had to slowly forget their memories of service in the army of their 'previous group' – the 'British Irish'. By exploring the ways in which such forgetting was encouraged and enabled one can see how various institutions, both those within the extent of official government and those much more informally organising society, were influential in shaping the new collective memory and, if we follow Halbwachs, the new collective.

The current memory work involving Remembrance on the island of Ireland can be seen as part of an attempt to once more construct a new collective. This would be one in which those who suppressed their family memories of involvement in the British Army would feel both acknowledged and welcome. It would also be one in which the commonality of such a past across political divides, i.e. including ardent nationalists, was appreciated. Reconciliation and peace are, therefore, the drivers of much of the discursive construction being undertaken with regard to the discourse of Remembrance not only in Belfast but also in Dublin. Remembrance is seen as one of the key areas for the shaping of a 'shared history'. Consequently several of the institutions mentioned above are involved, some more enthusiastically than others, in signifying practice – the production or suppression of texts, attendance at or non-condemnation of rituals – as part of an overall policy of conflict management. It is hoped that through these discursive interventions the 'community' being remembered will expand to potentially include all inhabitants of the island. The identity and unity functions of collective memory will be exploited to bring about Olick's 're-membering'.

Whilst such symbolic work on the collective memories of the war has appeared to deliver some significant advances in the 'Peace Process' various writers have identified some inherent problems with such a strategy. Severally they argue that the focus on strengthening and broadening commemorations will have the effect of maintaining the status quo, reifying exclusive group identities, reproducing divisions and conflict, resisting change, and reducing the possibility of challenges. Fitzpatrick, for example, argues that such attempts at a 'shared history' through commemoration encourages the acceptance of simplistic dichotomies, such as 16th Division / Irish Volunteers versus the 36th Division / Ulster Volunteer Force, which leads to the marginalisation of other groups and the over-simplification of what was a complex story. (2013: 126) Here we could suggest that his historian's complaints about 'bad history' betray too much concern with 'what actually happened' rather than how stories about the past can effect policy in the present. His next concern, however, carries more weight. He argues that an excessive focus on the set-piece events of Easter Monday 1916 and the first day of the Battle of the Somme on the 1st of July 1916 ignores, in the first case, 'the slow and messy course of political change in Ireland' including the bitter fratricide of the civil war and, in the second, 'the monotony and attrition of trench warfare' (ibid). As a consequence they shape the discourse of military violence to emphasise the excitement and glamour at the expense of the horror and mess. Brian Hanley (2013) shares this concern at the uncritical attitude to war he perceives as developing as a result of increased engagement with Remembrance which he describes as attempts 'not just to remember but to justify and embrace' the war (p109). He agrees with McCann that the dead of the Great War should be remembered not with pride but with anger, as the title of his 2014 work puts it – *Remember with Rage.* Anne Dolan (2013) also focuses on the reifying of certain types of divisions through commemoration. In particular she asks why so little is mentioned of class divisions. More originally, she asks why no attention is given to the 'division between the ardent and the indifferent?' (p151) This majority that 'carried on carrying on' are largely ignored whilst 'we listen to the minority of fighters for whatever cause so much more' (ibid).

Another critique focuses on the workings of commemoration and sees it as inherently conflictual. Rigney (2010) argues that 'memory sites' (she uses the term not necessarily geographically) 'only stay alive as long as people consider it worth arguing about their meaning' (p346). Conflict leads to commemoration. Therefore ultimate agreement about any such mnemonic node will result in its exhaustion in terms of mnemonic significance. Rebecca Graff-McRae (2010) argues in the other direction. Commemoration is inherently

conflictual. It depends upon and also reproduces divisions. Whilst producing internal unity it necessarily reproduces external division. It is both constructive and destructive. Most damaging of all, its apparent display of politics has the effect of depoliticising the event and the phenomena being commemorated i.e. war (p94-95).

Graff-McRae's analysis decisively undermines the positive glow surrounding contemporary developments in the discourse of Remembrance on the island of Ireland. In examining my case studies, and in my conclusion, I aim to evaluate the extent to which her insights help to explain the dynamics of Remembrance and subsequently address how those who would wish to intervene in conflict in Northern Ireland might use her views to inform their approach.

The next section of this dissertation comprises of three case studies presenting and exploring the data produced by my research. They could have been organised in a variety of ways but I have settled on a grouping that marries geography with identity. Thus we will first explore the Shankill Road, the working class Loyalist 'Heart of Empire', and analyse how the texts and practices of Remembrance found there can be seen to work in the construction of discourses of identity. After this we will travel the short distance to the Falls Road, symbol of Republicanism, and look for the traces of Remembrance in this less likely venue and discuss how their presence and absence can be understood in terms of discourses of identity. Lastly we will move further afield and look at the Island of Ireland Peace Park at Messines in Belgium and explore how this 'neutral' venue has been a key site for the generation of discursive interventions regarding Remembrance and national identity.

Chapter 7   Remembrance on the Shankill Road.

The role of the Shankill in the Great War

In 1912, with the threat of Home Rule for Ireland growing, almost half a million men and women signed the two parts of 'Ulster's Solemn League and Covenant' which pledged them to resist the imposition of Home Rule by all means necessary. By the following year a militia, the Ulster Volunteer Force (UVF), had been raised to enable such resistance. Money was secured to buy guns from Germany and 20000 rifles and some 3 million rounds of ammunition were landed and distributed to units across Ulster. The Irish nationalists responded by forming the Irish Volunteers. They procured a smaller amount of arms and commenced training.

By the summer of 1914 with the Home Rule Bill passing through parliament in London these two forces stood ready to fight over the future relationship of the island with the rest of the United Kingdom and the British Empire. Civil war was probably only averted because of the start of what came to be known as the Great War, European War or, finally, the First World War.

The leaders of the 'constitutional nationalists' who had established leadership of the Irish Volunteers offered their troops in the service of the Empire. This would demonstrate their loyalty to the Crown, encourage quick and favourable implementation of Home Rule when the war was done and also, hopefully, convince the Unionists to feel more comfortable with the thought of leaving the UK as the new Ireland would remain a loyal part of the Empire. Thousands of Volunteers enlisted in the new 16th (Irish) Division. The leaders of the UVF followed suit on condition that partition would keep some of the counties of Ulster within the UK in the event of the implementation of Home Rule. The UVF enlisted en masse as the 36th (Ulster) Division.

After training in Ulster the 36th (Ulster) Division went to the trenches of the Western Front. On the morning of July 1st 1916 they were part of the first day of the Battle of the Somme, a massive attack aimed at breaking the stalemate that had developed with construction of the trenches. It was the worst day in the British Army's history. Almost 20000 men were killed and almost 40000 were recorded as either wounded or missing. The 36th Division had more success than others in their region of the line. They managed to take the first trenches at the difficult defensive position known as the Schwaben Redoubt but progressed

so much further than the troops on either of their flanks that they ended up exposed to enemy fire from three sides. Eventually, in the face of a German counter-attack at 10pm they had to fall back to their own trenches. They had lost more than 2000 killed and another 3000 wounded or missing. (Jeffery, 2000; Orr, 2008; Grayson, 2009)

Constructing the Meaning of Death and the dominance of the Great War

As in the other troops made up of the so-called 'Pals Battalions' the vast majority of the casualties all came from the same hometown. The impact of this disastrous loss of life was therefore felt by almost every family in the area. All had lost a family member, friend or loved one. This loss was amplified in the community by it all happening simultaneously. Such an appalling event needed to have meaning and this was quickly constructed. Fussell (2000: 138-9), in looking at the writings of soldiers discerned that their experience of the war was made sense of using the literary resources – the *Oxford Book of Verse*, *Pilgrim's Progress* and Victorian romances – available to them. Eliade (1989: 147) points to the use of existing archetypes and myths in such work. In such ways were events made sense of. For the Unionist population of Ulster such resources included the stories of their loyal resistance and suffering at the Siege of Londonderry before their subsequent deliverance and eventual victory at the Battle of the Boyne in 1690. These stories had been kept alive not only in their written histories but also in the collective memory as reproduced on the streets in the numerous Orange Parades and religious services that recalled and celebrated these events and the gable-end street murals that commemorated 'King Billy'. Even if those who had died had not originally been volunteers in a militia formed to protect Ulster from papist 'Rome Rule' they would very probably have still been incorporated into such a handily robust and popular narrative. The fact that they had, indeed, taken up arms in such a 'holy' cause made such a construction of meaning on their deaths almost inevitable. At the first Orange Parade after the war in the summer of 1919 the Battle of the Somme had joined these other two elements in the banners on the streets (Jarman, 1999). As such it was woven into the Unionist memory of loyal service to God and the Crown. Moreover, in light of the strained relationship with the British government over the issue of Home Rule, the losses at the Somme were constructed as now constituting a debt of loyalty owed by the British state to the Unionist people of Ulster. 'The People' had made a 'blood sacrifice' that must surely guarantee their continued security and religious freedom within the Empire. As such, and coupled with the slim comfort of the initial success of the Division, the

battle, and its commemoration, took on overtones of triumph (Loughlin, 2002; Jarman, 1999; Moloney, 2010)

The Battle of the Somme lasted another four months after this, for the British, disastrous start. It was a war of attrition and consciously so. Planned and ordered by General Douglas Haig. By the end of 1916 the British had lost almost 420,000 men and the French just over 200,000 to the German's losses of between 680,000 (British Military figures) and 450,000 (German estimates – favoured in Niall Ferguson's (1999) audit of the war). The front line had moved just 6 miles closer to Germany. The Great War continued for another two years and by its end almost 10 million had been killed, 15 million maimed, and 7 million held prisoner. In Britain alone the figures were almost three-quarters of a million dead, nearly a million wounded and half-a-million captive. The Second World War would, for most of the states involved, bring even worse casualty figures, particularly amongst the civilian population, but for the British, whose casualty figures halved in WWII, the Great War remains the most costly. In setting out these figures my aim is to enable an understanding of the context of Remembrance of the First World War across Britain, and indeed the whole of the British Empire. It is not just a matter of numbers. In my use of Fussell (2000), Eksteins (1989) and Dyer (2009) I have examined some of their perceptions of how this war has dominated 'British collective memory' ever since. One could also reach for Marianne Hirsch's (1992) concept of 'postmemory' to describe this phenomenon well illustrated by the puzzled writings of Vernon Scannell in his poem 'Great War' (1962). I reproduce it here in full because it is such an excellently constructed example of the amount of detail that such inherited collective memories possess.

Whenever war is spoken of / I find / The war that was called Great invades the mind: / The grey militia marches over land / A darker mood of grey / Where fractured tree-trunks stand / And shells, exploding, open sudden fans / Of smoke and earth.

Blind murders scythe / The deathscape where the iron brambles writhe; / The sky at night / Is honoured with rosettes of fire, / Flares that define the corpses on the wire / As terror ticks on wrists at zero hour.

These things I see, / But they are only part / Of what it is that slyly probes the heart: / Less vivid images and words excite / The sensuous memory / And, even as I write, / Fear and a kind of love collaborate / To call each simple conscript up / For quick inspection: / Trenches' parapets / Paunchy with sandbags; bandoliers, tin-hats, / Candles in dug-outs, / Duckboards, mud and rats.

Then, like patrols, tunes creep into the mind: / *A long, long trail, The Rose of No Man's Land, / Home Fire*s and *Tipperary*; / And through the misty keening of a band

/ Of Scottish pipes the proper names are heard / Like fateful commentary of distant guns: / Passchendaele, Bapaume, and Loos, and Mons.

And now, / Whenever the November sky / Quivers with a bugle's hoarse, sweet cry, / The reason darkens; in its evening gleam / Crosses and flares, tormented wire, grey earth / Splattered with crimson flowers, / And I remember, / Not the war I fought in / But the one called Great / Which ended in a sepia November / Four years before my birth.

(Scannell, 1993: 68)

So even for this soldier of the Second World War, who experienced several years of some of the most difficult fighting, much of it in what one would assume to be the memorable setting of the North African desert, the mise-en-scene that 'slyly probe[s] the heart' is the myth of the 'Great War' constructed and reiterated from a time before his birth. His 'memory' of war does not fit with this 'collective memory' and he finds the latter dominant in his thoughts.

Remembrance of the Great War in British collective memory was not eclipsed by the Second World War. Fifty years after this poem was written anyone viewing the BBC broadcast of the annual Remembrance ceremony in London would still find it dominated by items filmed amongst the pristine ranks of Portland stone headstones in Flanders and using shaky footage and frozen stills of life and death in the trenches. The arrival of four years of centenaries of the war's key moments has only added to this focus.

There is, therefore, nothing unusual about the Unionist population of the Shankill Road being familiar with the Great War and seeing it as a major landmark in their shared memory. What I hope to show, however, is the extent to which, and the ways in which, this 'memory site' (Nora, 1996) or 'figure of memory' (Rigney, 2010: 345) occupies a much more prominent place in the collective memory and thus culture of the Unionist population of Northern Ireland than it does in the rest of the population of the UK.

Why the Shankill?

My focus on the Shankill Road was for a range of reasons. My time and resources were limited and I had to restrict my focus in some way rather than attempting coverage of the whole province or even city. The Shankill is a relatively small area with just the one main street running through it. It is also known of worldwide owing to its long history of conflict through the decades of the Troubles. Much of this is because of its proximity to that other

famous road – the Falls. One can walk from the Loyalist Shankill to the Republican Falls in less than five minutes so long as you avoid a route that would involve your path being blocked by the 'Peace Wall' on Cupar Way. (Although see further thoughts on the traversing of this divide in the addressal of methods in Chapter 2). Consequently this has been one of the most active 'interface' areas in the Northern Ireland conflict. Its streets have featured in news reports on screens across the world and the words Shankill and Falls have become a useful shorthand for reference to the 'two communities'.

Both areas are, of course, aware of this attention. Since the ceasefires and the partial normalisation of life in Belfast these two roads, but particularly the Falls, have become newly attractive to tourists. 'Troubles Tours' are one of the draws of the city as it works to attract tourists after many years of, and continuing, economic deprivation. The open-topped buses crawl up and down the Shankill (Fig.3) and the Falls giving visitors the opportunity to observe at close quarters these 'vibrant, dynamic and fascinating' communities with their 'extraordinary wall murals and political imagery' (http://belfastcitysightseeing.com/hop-on-hop-off-belfast-city-sightseeing-tour-map/). Belfast's famous 'Black Cabs', which have served as shared public transport in some areas of the city for decades, have also seen the opportunity to service tourists and offer tours of the murals and peace walls to smaller groups (Fig.4). These groups can often be seen near sites of interest on the Falls listening to a narration from the driver that constructs what they see on the walls. I have never seen such a group on the Shankill.

Fig.3. Sightseeing bus on the Shankill by the Bayardo memorial. 36th Division flag in background. July 2016. © John Poulter

Fig.4. Flyer for Black cabs Troubles tours (detail), Belfast, November 2012. © John Poulter

Given that these two areas have, therefore, become established as the pre-eminent sites for the observation of the political imagery of Loyalism and Republicanism this has encouraged the production of such imagery with an eye not only to an internal, community, audience but also an external, global, one. Here is an example of Tzanelli's (2008) 'diforia' or the art of speaking to both such audiences at once.

So for all these reasons – compactness, proximity, infamy/renown, and their diforic exhibitionary role – they suited my purposes.

Mapping the territory

As you leave the city centre and cross over the dual carriageway you are now greeted by a tourist information board welcoming you to the Shankill (Fig.5). As well as a brief written history of the area four key sites are identified: the Shankill Graveyard, illustrated by a photograph of the statue of Queen Victoria; the West Belfast Orange Hall, with a detail of an Orange banner; St Matthew's (Protestant) Church of Ireland Parish Church; and Shankill Memorial Gardens, with a close-up of a 'Remembrance Cross', a small wooden cross with an imitation poppy fixed to the middle of it and the words 'In Remembrance' printed beneath this. This establishes the four key identifiers of the Shankill 'community': Royalty (to whom Loyalty), Orangeism and Protestantism in general, and Remembrance. The map next to these points out various landmarks and places of interest including mural sites – but only two – the one near to the site of the Shankill Bombing of 1993 which gives details of all the IRA attacks on the people of the street and the collection of murals, arches, flags and memorials to the UVF and the 36th (Ulster) Division next to the Rex Bar.

Fig.5. Shankill tourist information board, on approach to Shankill Road from city centre, Belfast, November 2012. © John Poulter

The board is in perfect condition and unmarked by vandalism or graffiti whenever I see it. In these streets that would seem to signify that it not only meets with local approval, nothing would survive long here if seen as imposed and inaccurate, but also carries a sense of local ownership and value. This signifies that the paradigmatic choices made in highlighting these elements of the territory and community are seen as valid by those within the community with a desire to construct, maintain and promote their sociobiographical narrative.

Crossing the bridge over the 'Westlink' one comes to another welcome. This time the style is such that it might pass for an advertising hoarding were it not painted on a gable wall. 'Shankill. Original Belfast. Since 455AD' (Fig.6).

Fig.6. 'Shankill, Original Belfast, since 455AD' mural, Shankill Road, Belfast, July 2012. © John Poulter

The layout is reminiscent of a Levi ad. In the background various landmarks of the Shankill and the text: 'The parish of Belfast was originally called Shankill which signifies 'Old Parish''. One is unused to coming across the use of 'signifies' in public notices rather than academic writings. The use is, of course, like every other choice in the construction of such texts, deliberate. Another way of explaining this history is to say that 'Shankill' comes from the Irish/Gaelic *Seanchill* meaning 'old church'. Such an explanation would be more likely to prove controversial with the locals. It would imply that the area had not always been 'British' and bring the politicised (Republicanised) Irish language onto the Road. Ensuring the locals were happy with the mural would have been very much in mind of those designing it. This would not have been just the local paramilitary leaders as usual but rather 'community representatives' alongside representatives of the 'Reimaging Communities Programme'. This government funded programme used just short of £5 million to replace 'militaristic' murals with less confrontational ones (Rolston, 2010b: 298). The mural it replaced is reproduced in miniature on a small plaque beneath the new work. It was a large Ulster Defence Association (UDA) symbol featuring the Red Hand of Ulster and the words

'2nd Battalion, C Company, Shankill Road, Belfast. Simply the Best.' C Company was led by the notorious Johnny 'Mad Dog' Adair.

Just past the mural we pass Boundary Road and are on the Shankill Road proper. Continuing up the road for a further 300 metres, past a KFC restaurant, petrol station, two large medical centres and leisure (sports) centre we arrive at the start of the area on the road with the most concentrated collection of political signs. This stretch, from Northumberland Street to Cambrai Street, is only some 700 metres long and it is in this small area that I have concentrated my attentions over the period of my research. Along most of this stretch the road is busy with small shops, pubs and clubs on either side of the street.

Overlaid upon this otherwise typical UK street scene are the various political signs of Unionism and Loyalism. The most ubiquitous of these are the Union Jack flag typically used to signify the United Kingdom and the Northern Ireland flag which features not only the Red Hand of Ulster but also the Crown. At any time of the year these would be in evidence in some shop windows and flying from some lampposts but at certain times of the year, and particularly around the summer 'marching season', when hundreds of Orange Parades take place across Northern Ireland, they appear, joined by a range of other flags including ones connected to the UVF, every few metres along the road. At such times bunting also festoons the street with the triangles of red, white and blue cloth strung across the road, between lamp posts and across the front of shops. In many Loyalist areas the kerbstones would also have been painted red, white and blue, but these territorial markers are perhaps less necessary in such a well-known Loyalist heartland.

There are a number of key memory sites or what Nora (1996b) would refer to as *lieux de mémoire* in this area. They can all be described as memorials. They include murals, monuments, memorial gardens and cemeteries. Here I shall focus on some of these sites and explore the ways in which they use the signs of Remembrance to shape the discourse of collective memory and discourses of identity.

The Road as a whole can be seen to act as a *lieu de mémoire* in that it is difficult to stand anywhere upon it and not have in sight some of the intertextually connected signs of the Great War, Loyalism and Britishness. These include red, white and blue bunting, murals, memorials, poppy wreaths, posters, shop displays and flags. These signs are so ubiquitous

that it encourages disagreement with Nora's (1996b) argument that *milieu de mémoire* no longer exist.

The Ubiquity of the 36th, 'blood sacrifice' and the UVF

Mentions of the 36th (Ulster) Division, and thus, either explicitly or implicitly, the First World War, are everywhere. Numerous murals and other displays mention the 36th and several of these also mention the Somme. The dominant meaning of the Somme is constructed as a blood sacrifice – 'For God and Ulster'. The dead are 'valiant' and 'heroic' and their 'cause' is 'noble'. Such a construction is, as has been explained in previous chapters and above, typical of monumental texts commemorating war dead. In the case of the Unionist population of 'Northern Ireland', however, there was the additional recent experience of the troubled relationship with the British government and the need for a positive outcome from deliberations on partition and Home Rule. The need to construct the meaning of the mass slaughter as a willing 'sacrifice' was not just to assuage the guilt of the survivors but to place a burden of debt upon the British. (J. Burke 2016)

In most of these texts the 36th are explicitly, and understandably given their origins, connected back to the original UVF. It is the UVF who are the focus of commemoration and at the centre of this is the same pride and honour. A prominent example is the collection of displays in the yard next to the Rex Bar (Figs.7-10). This is the setting for an obelisk memorial complete with flagpole commemorating the 36th. The walls are decorated with murals which have served to commemorate the signing of the Covenant, gunrunning, the training of the UVF, and the experiences of the 36th at the Somme. In 2016 they held a large picture of the Thiepval Memorial and other details about the Great War. Overlooking the yard are boards showing the 36th in no-man's-land and several flagpoles with Divisional flags flying. All of this occupies the same space as the outside seating area of the pub. In this way these memorial texts serve an educational function that is inserted into the leisure time experience of the people of the area. And this is true to a lesser extent for the passers-by who are exposed to these texts, the nearby boards displaying the poem 'In Flanders Field' and, across the road, a memorial mural to three UVF members killed here by the IRA featuring poppies and 'Lest we Forget' painted onto the walls of the (ex) headquarters of the UVF (Fig.11).

Fig.7. 36th (Ulster) Division memorial and murals, Rex Bar outdoor seating area, Shankill Road, November 2013. © John Poulter

Fig.8. 36th (Ulster) Division 'Arch' and flags, Rex Bar outdoor seating area, 2008. © John Poulter

Fig. 9. Information boards on Great War and UVF, memorial and flags, Rex Bar outdoor seating area, Shankill Road, July 2016. © John Poulter
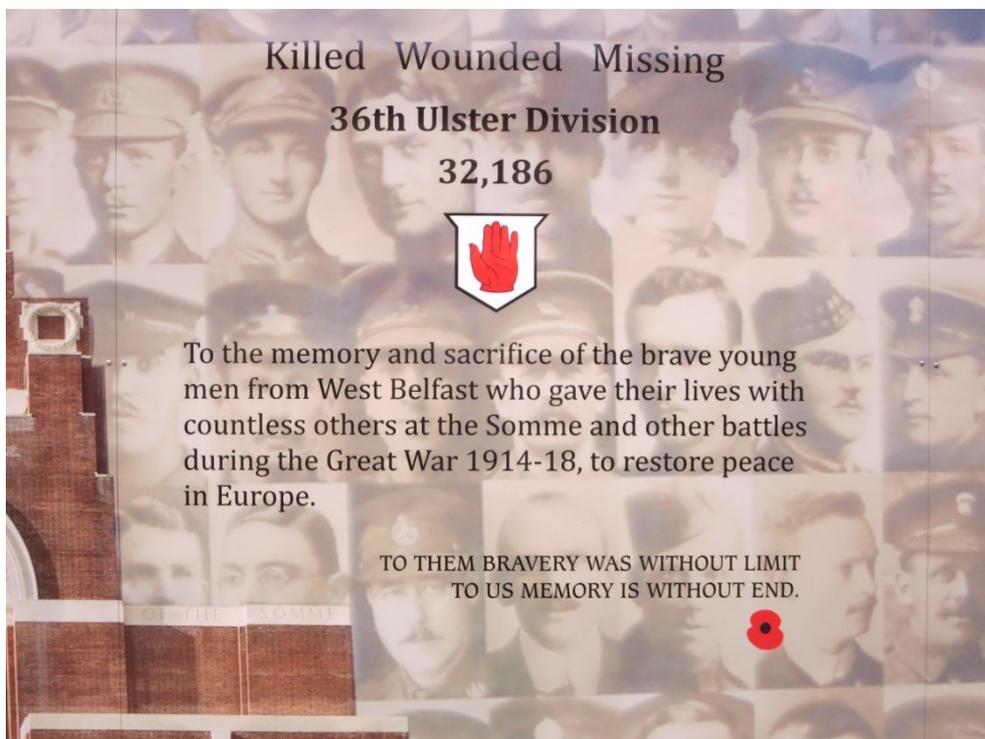
Fig.10. 'Memory without end', detail of Great War information board, Rex Bar outdoor seating area, Shankill Road, July 2016. © John Poulter

Fig.11. UVF memorial mural, with poppy wreath from UVF, to Trevor King and two other UVF members killed by IRA, opposite Rex Bar, Shankill Road, November 2013. © John Poulter

In the mid-1960s when a group of Loyalists organised themselves into a paramilitary outfit it was logical that they should choose to re-use the name of the UVF. The name gave them a past and longevity and thus authority and credibility. Such an appropriation did not go unchallenged, particularly within Unionism, but the similarities in cause and some methods (Moloney, 2010: 329) supported this reclamation of the name. Once such a link was established then connecting the 'modern' UVF with the 36th and thus the battle of the Somme was possible and likely if also controversial. But as Graham and Shirlow (2002) argue, it can be argued that this should not be seen as an 'appropriation' of the Somme by the UVF as it is very much a part of working class Loyalist history as are they.

The construction of an equivalence: Great War soldier and Paramilitary

In the years following the paramilitary ceasefires many murals appeared which worked to construct an equivalence between the soldier of the Great War, and specifically the soldier of the 36th (Ulster) Division, and the modern UVF paramilitary. By the period of my research (2007-2016) many of these were still in existence. A good example is that on Glenwood Road (Fig.12). A First World War soldier and a balaclaved paramilitary stand side by side bowing their heads to poppy-strewn war graves whilst a piper on the horizon plays a lament. Remembrance is also intertextually signified in the memorial declaration which states that 'Their names liveth forevermore'. This is one of the key phrases of Remembrance chosen by Kipling from the book of Ecclesiasticus (with 'name' rather than 'names') and carved into the Stone of Remembrance located like an altar at the heart of every Commonwealth/Imperial War Cemetery.

Fig.12. Modern UVF paramilitary & Great War soldier, Glenwood Street, Shankill Road, Belfast, 2008. © John Poulter

The construction of this equivalence can also be seen in memorial 'Rolls of Honour' celebrating the efforts of members of paramilitary organisations. An example is that for C Company, 1st Battalion, UVF. Above the list of names of the men who operated in the

streets of Belfast is a typical scene of First World War soldiers advancing into no-man's-land. Below the names is the belligerent verse from McRae's 'In Flanders Field' and 'Lest We Forget' (Fig.13).

Fig.13. Roll of Honour, C Company, 1st Belfast Battalion, UVF, Shankill Road, Belfast, November 2011. © John Poulter

Graham (2010: 495) believed that such a link was being downplayed in more recent imagery and Brown (2007: 720) also argued that 'the centre of gravity of commemoration is tipping towards the historic' as such comparisons become fewer but if we analyse the mural that has recently replaced the one on Glenwood Road we can see that it is still very much present (Fig.14).

Fig.14. Replacement No. 4 Platoon, UVF, 'continuity' mural, Glenwood Street, Shankill Road, Belfast, 2016. © John Poulter

In the centre is the badge of the UVF with the Hand and 'For God and Ulster'. Top left are two well-known photographs of the original UVF and then the 36th being inspected by, amongst others, the leader of the Anti-Home Rule movement, Edward Carson. The bottom half of the mural is a field of poppies with words, from Laurence Binyon's poem *For the Fallen*, which are central to all Remembrance ceremonies – 'At the going down of the sun and in the morning, we will remember them'. Top right is the most complex section of the mural with images layered upon each other. The top layer is a photograph of four modern, balaclaved UVF men arranged in an armed pose radiating out from the centre. This pose is familiar to viewers of UVF murals over the years but the new technology of the digitally produced sheets enables a photograph of actual paramilitaries to replace the previous standard painted version.

Beneath this layer is perhaps the most interesting aspect of the mural – a ghostly reappearance of the mural, described above, that was previously on this spot. This restates the equivalence between modern UVF and Great War soldier through a re-presentation of the two side by side at the graveside. To underline this equivalence two headstones are shown at bottom centre – one a standard Commonwealth War Grave headstone with the

inscription 'A Soldier of the Great War. Royal Irish Rifles' and the regimental badge. The 9th Battalion of this regiment was formed from the West Belfast Volunteers i.e. UVF. Next to this is a dark headstone with the UVF emblem and 'Here lies a Soldier'.

A last interesting detail is the arrangement along the bottom of four upturned rifles and headgear which metonymically construct a narrative of continuity amidst change. The first, and oldest, has a cloth cap hanging on it (as worn by the original UVF); the second, to match its vintage has a typical Great War tin helmet upon it; the third is an Armalite with a commando style cap with a UVF badge on it; and the last is a Kalashnikov with a UVF badged balaclava on it. This is a novel way to intertextually demonstrate the passage of a century and the attendant change and, crucially, continuity during that time.

There is no doubting the central message here: this continuity and the shared cause and validity of this evolving, but always with the same membership, organisation of militant Loyalism. Even the change in the murals sited at this spot is acknowledged yet at the same time constructed as an act of continuity. This is done through the palimpsestic inclusion of traces of the original, with its central message of the equivalence of service in the 36th and the UVF, in its replacement.

This equivalence is supported in every memorial mural featuring the UVF. All use poppies and the lexicon of Remembrance including the phrases mentioned above and also the words of McCrae's poem *In Flanders Field*. Most of these memorial murals also feature hooks and these are filled with wreaths at particular times of the year including Remembrance Sunday in November and the anniversary of the first day of the battle of the Somme on 1st July (Fig.15). Where hooks are not available wreaths are leaned up against the mural.

Fig.15. Replacement UVF 'continuity' mural with poppy wreaths on hooks and plaques listing deceased members who died 1973-2016, Glenwood Street, Shankill Road, Belfast, 2016. © John Poulter

One of the most striking murals on the Road is that displaying the Ulster Tower at Thiepval on the Somme battlefield (Figs.16,17). This memorial replicates the tower in County Down near which the old UVF and then 36th Division trained before heading for the Western Front. The huge mural of the Tower makes no mention of the UVF. It only mentions the soldiers of the 36th and the other 'Sons of Ulster' 'who laid down their lives', in line with the dominant construction of these deaths as self-sacrifice, in the Great War. But next to the mural is a plaque stating that the mural had 'been dedicated' by the 'West Belfast Athletic and Cultural Society' (WBACS). This is an organisation set up by Loyalist UVF ex-paramilitary prisoners. Proximity of texts also produces meaning. Whilst the Glenwood mural places elements alongside each other to construct a connection between them and shape the meaning of both here the plaque alone serves to indicate the institution that produced this 'statement' of the Tower mural. Local knowledge would equate the WBACS with the UVF and thus see the mural as commemorating and celebrating the modern UVF as well as their predecessors. Indeed, even without the plaque the Tower would be related to the current organisation as this symbol has come to be a signifier of the modern UVF. This is carried

across many texts including the insignia which appears in the centre of the poppy wreaths of the '1st Shankill Somme Association', whose membership and territorial base mirror that of the 1st Battalion of the UVF.

Fig.16. Ulster Tower mural, corner of Conway Street and Shankill Road, November 2010. © John Poulter

Fig.17. Replacement Ulster Tower mural with poppy wreath from UVF, corner of Conway Street and Shankill Road, November 2016. © John Poulter

This proximity produces meaning at the *lieu de mémoire* consisting of a mural, memorial stone, gates and wreath hooks on Northland Street, unofficially renamed 'Thiepval Street' at the time of the memorial's unveiling, just off the Shankill (Fig.18). The mural features various images of soldiers in the trenches and no-man's-land of the Great War, the insignia of the 36th and, at the top, in a ring of poppies, Sir Edward Carson (Fig.19), leader of the Unionists and founder of the UVF. For all its prominent inclusion of Carson it makes no explicit reference to the modern UVF, unlike the explicitly UVF mural it replaced, but the memorial stone (Fig.20) in front of it makes it very clear who it is commemorating:

> As poppy petals gently fall / Remember us who gave our all / Not in the mud of foreign fields / Nor buried in the desert sand // In Ulster field and farm and town / Fermanagh's lanes and drumlin'd Down / We died that violent death should cease / And Ulstermen might live in peace.

Once again what appears to be a mural that shifts the focus away from recent paramilitary support towards historical events relevant to the community is transformed back into just such support for those readers who are either familiar with – have access to – this discourse of equivalence and continuity or for those who care to take a closer look at the texts and then make sense of them. Other ostensibly 'historic' murals also have plaques located alongside them listing the names of dead local paramilitaries. Rolston (2010: 301) has observed this practice elsewhere in Belfast.

Fig.18. UVF memorial, Northland Street, Shankill Road, November 2010. © John Poulter

Fig.19. Sir Edward Carson in ring of poppies, UVF memorial mural (detail), Northland Street, Shankill Road, November 2010. © John Poulter

THIS STONE IS DEDICATED TO THE MEMORY OF
THE FALLEN VOLUNTEERS OF No. 5 PLATOON
A. COMPANY 1ST BELFAST BATTALION
ULSTER VOLUNTEER FORCE

AS POPPY PETALS GENTLY FALL
REMEMBER US WHO GAVE OUR ALL
NOT IN THE MUD OF FOREIGN LANDS
NOR BURIED IN THE DESERT SANDS.

IN ULSTER FIELD AND FARM AND TOWN
FERMANAGH'S LANES AND DRUMLIN'D DOWN
WE DIED THAT VIOLENT DEATH SHOULD CEASE
D ULSTERMEN MIGHT LIVE IN PEACE;

Fig.20. UVF memorial stone, Northland Street, Shankill Road, November 2010. © John Poulter

Even if such 'reading aids' were not present the meaning of these murals has already been shaped by the years of discursive work done to construct the equivalence. To those familiar with the local use of these texts any signifier of the Great War, and particularly the Somme, in these streets inevitably 'brings to mind' the modern UVF. Thus this meaning is close to

becoming myth to use Barthes (1972) term. It has become so dominant that it obscures from view any other possible connotation and appears natural. Such naturalisation results in a de-politicisation which strengthens its dominance through rendering its origins irrelevant. The meaning of memory of the Somme, and to a lesser extent all of the Great War, is to emphasise the loyalty, sacrifice and legitimacy of the modern UVF. At the same time, to those unfamiliar with this reading, for instance tourists, the dominant reading would be commemoration of the Great War and particularly the Somme. This diaforic communication achieves some of the aims of the Reimaging Communities Programme in that the explicit references to the relatively recent violent activities of local paramilitaries become, for the visitor, fewer and, in that sense, the area becomes normalised. Meanwhile the local reader of these texts sees not the Somme, or at least not just the Somme, but also the modern UVF – the local paramilitaries.

Rolston has argued (2010: 301) that the persistence of some of the 'contentious' murals – i.e. typically those showing armed paramilitaries in threatening poses – should not necessarily be seen as an impediment to progress in terms of peace. He argues that such images can enable progress whilst symbolically signifying constancy, an ongoing belief in the cause and a validation of past struggle and sacrifice. They act as a form of reassurance. There has not been a 'sell-out'. We have not 'given up'. You, therefore, do not have to turn to others who claim more purity and courage. Such 'alternatives' are more obvious on the Republican side but 'both communities' are being led forward and those with the most authority and credibility at grassroots level in this process are the ex-paramilitaries who have always controlled the production of the murals.

By successfully constructing, over a period of several years, the 'local' meaning of the Somme as the modern UVF they have achieved the same feat as the cigarette advertisers had to do in the face of increasing regulation of what they could show in ads in 1980s Britain. The most successful managed to change, for their target audience, the meaning of colours – as painted on racing cars and other targets for the camera at sporting events. Gold signified Benson & Hedges and purple meant Silk Cut. Once established, the loss of the ability to show more explicit detail is less of a hindrance to communication of the key message of ongoing presence and status – i.e. the status demonstrated by the power and success that enabled the continued ability to communicate. In such a way does the UVF communicate its ongoing presence and status.

Even where the focus of the memorial is, at first sight, on something else, one soon identifies prominent elements that intertextually connect it to the Great War. An example can be found at a junction where there was, for many years, a mural to the 'Shankill Protestant Boys (SPB) [flute band]' and the 'UVF'. This has been replaced, once again with the encouragement and funding of the Reimaging Communities Programme, by a collection of works which now make up 'Conor's Corner' (Figs.21,22). This commemorates the life and works of a local painter, William Conor, a statue of whom, palette and brush in hand, stands in front of a wall holding some examples of his work. His subjects include women at their doorways, children playing in the streets, shipbuilders and Orangemen but also soldiers of the 36th Division. A plaque near these last images exhorts the passer-by to 'Pass not this spot in sorrow,/ but in pride / That you may live / as nobly as they died / "In God our trust" / 1st July 1916'. The meaning of the ensemble is thus shaped through the prominence given to this one aspect of his work and this one moment in these subjects' lives. Meanwhile, the inclusion of a portrait of soldiers titled 'Fed Up' provides the resources to encourage not only a positive and jingoistic construction of this memory but also a more jaded one in line with some of the more critical observations of the PUP whose leader, Billy Hutchinson, spoke at the memorial's unveiling.

Fig.21. Conor's Corner, Shankill Road, July 2016. © John Poulter

Fig.22. Paintings of soldiers and plaque, Conor's Corner, Shankill Road, July 2016. © John Poulter

Power and Remembrance on the Shankill

The SPB have not disappeared from the 'canon' (A. Assman 2010: 198) of local collective memory – they are celebrated in a new mural just along the road – but Conor has been drawn from out of the 'archive' (ibid) and inserted into the canon along with aids to shape his meaning. This illustrates the way in which power is brought to bear on the discursive construction of memory. Government, through the Reimaging Communities funding, encourages a change in displays but power in the local community, in the person of the (ex)paramilitary organisations and their representatives, then works to maintain within the new display texts that reproduce elements of memory central to the construction of their identity. The new display offers a wider range of reasons for appreciating its contents. It celebrates art, friendship, play, skilled industry and all this within, and constructive of, 'the community'. At the same time it connects, through the portraits of the soldiers and the

guiding words of the plaque, with discourses of patriotism, martial masculinity and duty. Within Loyalism intertextual work has constructed meaning of the Great War to conflate the soldier of that conflict with the Loyalist paramilitary of the Troubles. Thus a commemoration and celebration of one works to laud both. In this way the new display manages to achieve many of the same meanings as the old UVF/SPB mural.

The production of these 'memorial' texts – the murals and monuments – are thus practices that discursively construct not only the ongoing meaning of the Somme and the Great War but also meanings relating to the modern UVF and the population inhabiting the geographical space these texts appear in. Like the painted kerbstones they also act as markers of territory. The most obvious audience for such a message might be those from the nationalist/republican community but they are also used as internal markers of territory within such a Loyalist heartland (Graham and Shirlow, 2002: 893). Use of the Somme was a particular marker of the UVF but has also been used by the other main Loyalist paramilitary organisation the Ulster Defence Association (UDA) / Ulster Freedom Fighters (UFF) with whom the UVF have often engaged in bloody feuds over territory and local power.

On the Shankill Road there are two main memorial gardens: the Shankill Memorial Park in the middle and the Garden of Reflection at the top. The Shankill Memorial Park (Fig.23) features three memorial stones. The central one is a war memorial which includes 'recent conflicts' – a term which enables the inclusion of those who have died in the Troubles. Off to one side near the entrance is a memorial to the victims of the Shankill bombing of 1993 but also to 'all innocent victims of terrorism from the Shankill community'. The most recent memorial is a large monument to the men of the 36th Division who died at the Somme. This garden also houses small informal individual memorial plots to local residents.

Fig.23. Shankill Memorial Park, Shankill Road, Belfast, July 2016. © John Poulter

The Garden of Reflection is a well laid out small park featuring a brick and etched glass memorial, several flagpoles, illustrative boards depicting the raising and training of the original UVF, murals to the 36th and, most recently, two imitation Commonwealth War Graves, a large depiction of a CWG 'Cross of Sacrifice', and a howitzer artillery piece (Figs.24,25,26,27)

Fig.24. 1st Shankill Somme Association 36th (Ulster) Division memorial, Somme Garden of Reflection, Shankill Road, Belfast, July 2016. © John Poulter

Fig.25. 1st Shankill Somme Association 36th (Ulster) Division memorial (detail), Somme Garden of Reflection, Shankill Road, Belfast, November 2013. © John Poulter

Fig.26. 'Greater Love..' mural and two replica CWGC headstones, 1st Shankill Somme Association Somme Garden of Reflection, Shankill Road, Belfast, July 2016. © John Poulter

Fig.27. Howitzer field artillery piece, 1st Shankill Somme Association Somme Garden of Reflection, Shankill Road, Belfast, July 2016. © John Poulter

These two memorial sites on the Shankill are the site of commemorative practices at the key Remembrance moments in the calendar, particularly Remembrance Sunday and July 1st. Parades are held to them and memorial services held with the laying of wreaths. The Garden of Reflection is clearly a memorial site constructed and used by the UVF. In recent years its wreaths have also been more visible in the Memorial Park where they tend to be laid at the new 36th (Ulster) Division memorial (Fig.28).

Fig.28. Original war memorial and new 36th (Ulster) Division Somme memorial (in background with UVF wreath), poppy boards on railings, Shankill Memorial Park, Shankill Road, Belfast, July 2016 © John Poulter

Fig.29. 'Mainland Britain UDA' poppy wreath laid at war memorial, Shankill Memorial Park, Shankill Road, Belfast, July 2016 © John Poulter

The Memorial Park has also been the venue for UDA commemorations with wreaths laid in July 2016, for example, by various 'Brigades' of the UDA – 'Scottish', 'Mainland Britain' (Fig.29) – as well as various other groups closely connected to the UDA such as 'Loyalist Prisoner Aid' and the 'UPRG' (Ulster Political Research Group) which fulfils a similar political role for the UDA as the PUP does for the UVF, if with less electoral success. There was also one from the 'Ulster Defence Union'. The emergence of this name in connection to the UDA and memory shows that they have learnt from the success of the UVF's 'labour of memory' (Allen 2015).

The Ulster Defence Union was formed as an Anti-Home Rule movement in 1893 and was eventually subsumed into other Unionist political organisations including the fledgling Ulster Unionist Party. The UDA stated at a Remembrance Day commemoration in November 2007 that they were setting up 'an umbrella organisation titled the Ulster Defence Union to facilitate the retirement of members and the needs that will affect them'. They went on to explain that their organisation, the UDA, was a continuation of the original UDU and that:

> Our members have from 1893 went forward and paid the ultimate sacrifice and gave their lives in the defence and freedom of small nations on Flanders fields at the Somme during the First World War, in Burma, Africa, Europe and the Middle East during WWII. We continue that struggle for freedom of small nations in the present theatres of war in Afghanistan and Iraq. (full document available on the CAIN website at http://cain.ulst.ac.uk/othelem/organ/uda/uda111107.htm)

In stating this they lay claim to an ancient lineage and thus legitimacy in the same way as the UVF. They include the Somme etc. as it is part of their families' history and they use typical Great War soldier silhouettes on the cards attached to their wreaths. The 'struggle for the freedom of small nations' in reference to British Army involvement in Iraq and Afghanistan can only make any kind of sense when one is aware that this is an attempt to appropriate the language of Irish nationalism in relation to the Great War.

The UVF have established their own version of this sort of 'old comrades' association – the various branches of the 'Somme Association' (not to be confused, somehow, with the cross-community organisation also called the 'Somme Association' set up to look after the Ulster Tower amongst other activities) (Brown, 2007: 720). The Shankill branch is the '1st Shankill Somme Association' and it is no coincidence that the 1st Battalion of the UVF occupied the same space. The Garden of Reflection at the top of the Shankill Road is fully titled '1st Shankill Somme Association Garden of Reflection'. The nearby Northern Ireland Supporters Club also has this prefix on its signs. The UVF have also established the 36th (Ulster) Division Memorial Association as another de facto ex-comrades association to commission memorials, publish commemorative texts and organise events including battlefield visits (J. Burke 2016) and the 36th Division Regimental Band Association provide musical accompaniment to parades and ceremonies of remembrance.

Such determined memory work can be understood as performing a number of functions. As explained above, such symbolic work (Willis 1990) acts to provide the (ex)paramilitaries with a venerable past that plugs into and feeds off the UK-wide reverence for the dead of the World Wars and particularly the Great War. It also works to give purpose to the maintenance of the organisational structures in projects that provide the opportunity for morale boosting rituals and commemorative projects.

Anyone doubting the ongoing organisational capability of the UVF would have learnt from attendance at Belfast Cenotaph on Remembrance Sunday November 2016. Two hours

earlier than the official city ceremony a parade listed by the Parades Commission as organised by the West Belfast Athletic and Cultural Society marched down the Shankill Road and through the centre of the city to the memorial next to City Hall. Two bands, four flag-bearers, several wreath-bearers, a piper and a bugler led the way and were followed by about 100 men in Great War uniforms carrying imitation rifles and machine guns (Figs.30,31,32). Their uniforms carried the name of the 9th Battalion (of the 36th Division) – which had comprised the West Belfast UVF. They were followed by twenty women in period nurses uniforms.

Fig.30. Period uniforms in UVF parade assembling at Belfast Cenotaph, Belfast, November 2016. © John Poulter

Fig.31. Period uniforms of UVF band in UVF parade leaving Belfast Cenotaph, Belfast, November 2016. © John Poulter

The most meaning-laden contingent of the parade came next – over a thousand men wearing black suit and tie (Fig.32). They marched in formation and arrayed themselves in military fashion around the grounds of the memorial. Without the ostensible purpose of commemorating the events of 100 years ago this organisation could not have paraded their strength quite so explicitly through the heart of the city.

Fig.32. Members of the West Belfast Athletic and Cultural Society parade away from Belfast Cenotaph and head towards the Shankill Road, Belfast, November 2016. © John Poulter

Fig.33. Wreaths laid at Belfast Cenotaph by WBACS parade, Belfast, November 2013. © John Poulter

Earlier the same week they had marched down the Shankill Road for the funeral of one of their leaders. The coffin was flanked by men in paramilitary clothing and the coffin draped in a UVF flag. After the ceremony floral tributes including many citing the names of various companies of the UVF were laid at the new 36th memorial in the Memorial Garden (Fig.34). These were prominent at the time of my visit on Remembrance Sunday a few days later. No UDA wreaths were present in the garden. Thus a memorial that is ostensibly commemorating First World War soldiers serves as a site for commemoration of a local paramilitary leader. And the funeral of that leader serves as an opportunity to demonstrate power over territory and reshape the local power dynamics.

Fig.34. Floral tributes including references to 'No. 1 Platoon' 'UVF' laid at the new 36th (Ulster) Division memorial, Shankill Memorial Park, Shankill Road, Belfast, November 2016. © John Poulter

The meaning of the Poppy

Glen Barr of the Journey of Reconciliation Trust and the Messines School for Peace Studies argues that once nationalists come to learn the 'true' meaning of the poppy their

discomfort with it will disappear. For Barr the meaning is simple – the remembrance of the deaths of those who died in the Great War in particular but also other subsequent wars. These dead he would characterise as predominantly young and working class. Whether they would have identified as sympathetic to the nationalist or unionist cause is, for him, irrelevant. Their tragic young deaths are what unite them and should unite us in remembrance of them. His argument is persuasive and much shared, particularly amongst those attempting to use remembrance as a vehicle for reconciliation. But the meaning of the poppy is, as he is aware, more complex than that. This can be illustrated by its use in texts and practices of remembrance on the Shankill.

Some of the wreaths and remembrance crosses placed at memory sites on the Road, such as the Memorial Park and the Garden of Reflection, would not be out of place at any other UK site of remembrance. They commemorate individuals or members of organisations, e.g. regiments, who died during service in the British Forces and particularly during the two World Wars. In terms of wreaths, these are the minority. The majority of poppy wreaths laid or otherwise displayed on the Road are commemorating members of loyalist paramilitary organisations. In terms of memorial murals whilst some poppies appear on memorials that are ostensibly commemorating soldiers of the Great War, and particularly the 36th, but see my argument above about the construction of meaning of these, many more appear on murals explicitly commemorating members of the paramilitary groups. In the light of this it is hardly surprising that the nationalist population are uncomfortable with the symbol. Their experience of the British Army over the period of the Troubles, and particularly the events of Bloody Sunday, would already have made many see it as alien and this association with organisations responsible for the deaths of hundreds of mainly Catholic civilians would multiply this feeling.

Beyond the use of the poppy to signify 'loyalist paramilitary' it also, on the Shankill, has other meanings. Lower down the Road stands the Bayardo memorial. This is a substantial memorial with three flagpoles, gates, a large memorial stone, pictures of the victims, several plaques and hooks for wreaths (Fig.35). Behind it has recently appeared a small garden with benches and backed by boards detailing and illustrating several notorious attacks on the Shankill by Republicans. On the night of 13th August 1975 a unit of the Provisional Irish Republican Army (PIRA) launched a bomb and gun attack on the Bayardo Bar. Five people were killed and 60 injured. One of the most reputable sources on the Troubles, McKittrick et al's (2007) *Lost Lives*, states that none of the dead had any

paramilitary connections. One of the men convicted of the attack, and the only one found still in the vehicle used heading away from the area, later rose to become a very prominent member of the PIRA and a close ally of the Sinn Fein leader Gerry Adams.

Poppy wreaths are laid at the memorial and placed on wall hooks designed for the purpose. Permanent metal wreaths of poppies stand either side of the arch of photos of the victims which is surmounted by the words 'Lest we Forget'. Every August 13th an annual commemoration event takes place here organised by the 1st Shankill Somme Association featuring a piper, period costume soldier, and the laying of a variety of wreaths with the poppy predominant among them. Wreaths and other floral tributes are also laid in November (Fig.36).

Fig.35. Bayardo Bar memorial, Shankill Road, Belfast, July 2013. © John Poulter

Fig.36. Bayardo Bar memorial, poppy cross, poppy wreaths and other floral tributes, Shankill Road, Belfast, November 2013. © John Poulter

This is not loyalist paramilitaries being commemorated but 'loyalist' civilians. Their identification by others, and after their deaths, as Loyalist is constructed from their tragic ends. Those constructing the memorial have the local power to define and validate the narrative of such events and to construct the identity of the victims. Their deaths are, therefore, not constructed as random and meaningless but are woven into the narrative of death in defence of 'Ulster'. The use of the poppy to commemorate their deaths works intertextually to confirm them as patriotic deaths and to confirm their *patri* to be unquestionably Britain.

This is not the only place on the Shankill where the poppy is used to commemorate not only Loyalist paramilitaries but also civilians confirmed as 'Loyalist' through their deaths at the hands of Republicans. The memorial in the Memorial Park to the Shankill victims of 'terrorism' and particularly the victims of the Shankill bombing has poppies placed upon it and Remembrance crosses, one for each of the Shankill bombing victims, laid in front of it during the annual periods of Remembrance (Fig.37).

Fig.37. Memorial to victims of Shankill bombing and other attacks on the 'Shankill community', Remembrance cross for each victim of the bombing, Shankill Road, Belfast, November 2012. © John Poulter

Another poppy feature at the Bayardo memorial is a metal cross made of poppies. A similar cross can be found at each of the sites of the 'atrocities' recorded on the board behind the Bayardo memorial along with accompanying plaques giving details of the event: The Four

Step Inn, Balmoral Furniture store (Fig.38), Mountainview Tavern, Bayardo Bar and Frizzell's Fish and Chip shop. Once again the poppy is used not for soldiers in a recognised army nor even for paramilitaries who see themselves as operating largely in support of the official forces but for civilians murdered by the enemies of Loyalism.

Fig.38. Metal poppy cross memorial to victims of Balmoral Furniture shop bomb attack, Shankill Road, Belfast, July 2016. © John Poulter

This category has recently been stretched to include those killed by the British Army. A plaque has been attached to the railings of the Bayardo memorial. It commemorates Alexander 'Minto' Howell, a 36 year old Protestant civilian, i.e. non-paramilitary, who was married with four children, killed on 28th December 1973 by a British soldier after a disturbance in the bar. His killer's acquittal led to serious rioting on the Shankill (McKittrick et al, 2007). On the railings near this is the emblem of the 'Bayardo Somme Association'. Thus the killing of a local civilian by a British soldier is being commemorated with the poppy at a memorial constructed by a local association ostensibly commemorating the British Army dead of the Somme but also serving as the commemorative organisation and old-comrades association for local paramilitaries.

The spread of the application of the poppy doesn't stop there. In the corner of the Belfast Graveyard that is the Shankill Rest Garden there are numerous small plaques commemorating locals. This is typical within the UK for those who have been cremated rather than buried. Less typical is the number of various floral and personal mementoes gathered around each one. In Britain there is usually a more orderly oversight and policing of such memorial sites. But, as one Republican interviewee pointed out to me when I mentioned the fact that the impressive Garden of Reflection next door had been constructed without any planning permission – 'This is Ireland. This isn't England'. What is certainly a departure from such a site in Britain is the number of poppies, poppy wreaths and Remembrance crosses added to this mix (Fig.39).

Fig.39. Family memorial with Remembrance crosses, Shankill Rest Garden, Shankill Graveyard, Shankill Road, Belfast, November 2012. © John Poulter

The same is true of what certainly appear to be similarly 'civilian' memorials in the borders of the Memorial Park down the Road. These are not people who have died a violent death at the hands of the enemy, and thus been posthumously credited with membership of the valiant Ulster people defending their homeland, but locals who have died of natural causes. Some of their memorials also include markers – flags, emblems, etc. – that identify them as part of the core Loyalist community but others have no such signifiers. Several of those being commemorated with inscriptions on Remembrance crosses at Belfast Cenotaph and on the Shankill also have no obvious military, or paramilitary, connections (Fig.40) although here we are faced with the difficulty of determining the identity of individuals mentioned in anonymously placed tributes. The details in McKittrick et al (2007) can help in this but only in relation to deaths in the Troubles. What can be stated with confidence is that the poppy has come to be used to explicitly commemorate a much wider range of deaths in Belfast than it would be used for in the rest of the UK. I have never seen the poppy being used in this more extensive way in Great Britain despite visiting several cemeteries in search of any evidence.

Fig.40. Remembrance crosses, Garden of Remembrance, Belfast Cenotaph, Belfast, November 2013. © John Poulter

The polysemic poppy illustrates the indeterminancy of meaning. It is a 'floating signifier'. Those who would mobilise it in the cause of reconciliation may believe that it has a 'true' meaning which is usable by all on the island but its use on the Shankill is just the most extreme example of the variety of ways in which it can be read. It demonstrates Barthes

(1977) 'Death of the Author'. Every use of the poppy quotes from previous and potential future uses. We may, like Jones (2013), wish to believe that the poppy no longer has Unionist overtones in Ireland but anyone with any knowledge of its use on the Shankill would reject such a claim. And yet one could see the logical potential for its seepage across category boundaries to offer up the possibility of it eventually becoming a marker of any and all death.

Such meanings, however, are unlikely to arrive any time soon, if ever, but may be encouraged by the use of Somme imagery in newspaper ads for a funeral director in Belfast, described by Jason Burke (2016), which featured a WWI scene of a soldier bowing his head at a poppy strewn grave with the strap line 'For your tomorrows we gave our today'. This is an example of the extent to which the signifiers and discourse of remembrance saturate this society.

The examples explored above are not the only ways in which this occurs. The two 'Loyalist' shops on the Shankill, the 'Shankill Historical and Cultural Society' – 'Remembering the Past with Pride' and 'Ulster Souvenirs' and others in Belfast and beyond, as well as selling the flags and other paraphernalia of Loyalism (Fig.41) also provide the material culture that extend the reach of the displays of such memory into the home and into the various moments of everyday life: mugs, keyrings, fridge magnets, ornaments, framed portraits and insignia, CDs (IMAGE), DVDs, tea towels, t-shirts, hats, scarves, bracelets, lapel badges, lighters, ties, handkerchiefs, shoes, dolls, Christmas cards (?!), etc., etc., decorated with or referencing poppies, the UVF, the 36th, the Somme and the Great War (Figs.42,43,44).

Fig.41. Flags for sale outside Ulster Souvenirs, Shankill Road, Belfast, July 2013. © John Poulter

Fig.42. Ulster Souvenirs shop window, Shankill Road, 2016. © John Poulter

Fig.43. UVF Band CD cover, bought on Shankill Road, 2012. © John Poulter

Fig.44. UVF Band CD cover, commemorating senior UVF figure Trevor King, killed by IRA on Shankill Road, bought in Shankill Historical and Cultural Society shop, 2012. © John Poulter

Beyond this the signifiers of remembrance are also used in combination with national sporting texts and practices. The Northern Ireland football team had a very successful Euro 2016 (European Football Championships). Even getting to the finals was a source of pride for such a relatively weak team. The banners displayed this pride, and exploited the coincidence of the year, by referencing back to the Great War. One banner simply had a silhouette of a war memorial on it but others spelt it out more clearly. At the Bayardo memorial five flags fly: the flag of Northern Ireland, the Scottish Saltire, the Union Jack, a 36th Division Great War flag, and a Northern Ireland football team flag (Fig.45). The 'football' flag has the team's emblem at the centre, poppies along the bottom, 'Off to France our boys were sent' at the top, and '1916 We will Remember Them 2016' at the bottom. Burke (2016) shows a similar one: it features a cross with poppies flanked by the team's badge. 'We Remember Our Fallen' and 'In the Footsteps of Our fathers' are accompanied by 'France' and '1916-2016'. Shops on the Shankill also stocked shirts showing scenes from the Somme with the option of buying it in the colours of the Northern Ireland team (Fig.46).

Fig.45. Five flags fly at the Bayardo Bar memorial, Shankill Road, Belfast, July 2013. © John Poulter

Fig.46. Shirts outside shop, Shankill Road, July 2016. © John Poulter

And such links and commemoration is not just a twice a year event. Groups commemorating the Somme hold events at any time of the year. Events can be marketed as 'Somme' events no matter how tenuous any connection might be: for instance, posters for a gig and disco at the Ulster Glasgow Rangers Supporters Club on the Shankill in April 2016 use a background of soldiers in poppy fields (Fig.47).

Fig.47. Poster for disco, Shankill Road, 2014. © John Poulter

This accumulation of texts and their use in practices are used in the construction of a discourse of remembrance that places it at the heart of Loyalist culture and places Loyalism at the heart of the culture of working class Protestant districts of Belfast. With this is attached the discursive construction of national identity as British. This isn't an inevitable connection. The meaning of the poppy and the meaning of Remembrance is, as we have seen, malleable. There is the potential for both to retain certain meanings whilst breaking the link with a current British identity. At the moment, however, this does not appear to be happening nor look likely to happen soon.

The role of signification of Remembrance on the Shankill

The discourse of Remembrance on the Shankill is a site of memory, or as Graham and Shirlow (2002) describe it, a 'memory resource'. They argue that for UVF (ex-)members in particular it acts as an 'identity narrative'. Certainly we can see the construction of and painstaking maintenance of what could be called a 'collective postmemory' which acts to sustain and define a group identity. Jason Burke (2016) feels Beiner's (2007) concept of

'memory capital' is useful in analysing this and I would add not only Bourdieu's concept of 'cultural capital' from which Beiner's usage will originate but also the concept of 'subcultural capital' as used by Thornton. Such capital is both 'personified' through the perfecting of practices and the building up of the necessary knowledge as well as 'objectified' in the possession of the 'right' signifiers: and these two categories overlap in the use of the material of the subculture in the personified practices of the group. Some, such as Muggleton (2000), would argue that subcultures are reifications of over eager popular culture academics but the concept would seem useful in understanding the 'necessary symbolic work' (Willis, 1990), here involving so much memory work, that is going on amongst groups such as the population of the Shankill Road. Possession of such capital enables people to identify themselves as distinct. The signifiers of remembrance are used not just as markers on the landscape to distinguish between both Loyalist and Republican and, to a certain extent, different factions of Loyalism, but are also utilised in the construction of categories of identity.

Graham and Shirlow (2002) argue that one use of the Somme in such discursive construction by the UVF is as a memory resource that provides a proud past untainted by accusations of sectarianism and free of official, middle-class Unionism, Orangeism and Britishness. Their argument is that all three represent the 'donkeys' who led the brave, young, working class 'lions' of the Shankill to their doom. Brown (2007) rejects this as he sees no evidence of such antipathy in Somme commemoration. On the evidence of the material on the streets of the Shankill I would have to agree with Brown that there is little *material* evidence to support Graham and Shirlow's argument. Such views can, however, be found in conversations with and publications by Loyalists. The booklet produced by the East Belfast Historical and Cultural Society (2007) to accompany and explain a new set of murals says of the one depicting the Somme that 'the heroism of the ordinary soldier was equalled only by the stupidity of the generals'. These sentiments have, however, yet to find their way explicitly onto the murals and memorials. In November 2013 I did find a surprisingly critical text in the centre of a poppy wreath laid by the 1st Belfast Branch of the Royal Irish Rangers 'Old Comrades Association' (Fig.48). This group had paraded from the '1st Shankill Northern Ireland Supporters Club' to the Memorial Park. It was the first two verses of Siegfried Sassoon's 'Suicide in the trenches':

I knew a simple soldier boy / Who grinned at life in empty joy, / Slept soundly through the lonesome dark, / And whistled early with the lark. // In winter

trenches, cowed and glum, / With crumps and lice and lack of rum, / He put a bullet through his brain. / No one spoke of him again.'

As usual, with signifiers of Remembrance on the Shankill, there is very probably more going on here than just a commentary on the desperation of young soldiers in the trenches. With the high rate of suicide amongst ex-paramilitaries in Belfast (Tomlinson, 2012) this could be another element of equivalence being intertextually constructed.

Fig.48. 'Suicide in the Trenches' wreath from '1st Belfast Branch Royal Irish Rangers O.C.A., Shankill Memorial Park, Shankill Road, November 2013. © John Poulter

Individual Loyalists also profess critical views on the Great War. Gusty Spence was the original leader of the modern UVF from the mid-1960s when he was jailed for murder. Much has been written on the Republican 'side' of the impact of spending years in 'the University of Long Kesh' but encouragement to engage in political analysis also affected Loyalist prisoners and Spence was one of the main drivers of such thinking (see e.g. David Ervine cited in Garland, 2001: 160 and 192-3). He and his brothers had all been in the British Forces and their father had been at the Somme. Gusty's study was a 'shrine to the Somme' (Taylor, 2000: 24) but his attitude towards it was shaped by his father's experience. Spence senior wouldn't allow the mention of the hated 'butcher' General

Haig's name in the house and wouldn't have one of his poppies on the premises either. As OC (Officer Commanding) of the UVF prisoners in Long Kesh Spence ran things very much along military lines. Remembrance Day was an important event and one at which he made speeches to the assembled men. His speeches, however, were suffused with a strongly anti-war sentiment. The purpose of Remembrance Day, he stated in 1975, was 'to remind all men of the futility of war'. He went on to say:

> War is too serious a game to be toyed with and death is very final so I will solicit you to put all romantic notions of war out of your heads. War is evil, inglorious and ugly and must only be engaged in as a last recourse instead of a first resort and constructive dialogue must always be pursued by righteous men. To ask a man to die for an ideal is outrageous but to ask him to die needlessly is criminal… The Ulster Volunteer Force has had its share of donkeys and recently men have died needlessly when they were sent out ill-prepared and ill-advised to carry out misguided missions.

Spence then turned to remembrance:

> I submit that we best pay respect to their memories by resolving that wars be eradicated – by removing injustice which invariably festers and bursts into violence – by ensuring that every man and woman and child in this province, disregarding race, creed, or calling can feel safe from fear and walk all our streets unmolested and unhindered. The awful reality of the situation is that 1,300 people have been slaughtered in our streets, ranging from unborn babies to eighty-year-old women. [Spence is alleged to have firebombed a building belonging to a Catholic in 1966. The man escaped injury but his 77-year old Protestant neighbour, Matilda Gould, died of her injuries.] What honourable war is this? What code of soldier-conduct prevails in such a war? Who can win when neighbour fights neighbour? – When children are booby-trapped and women tortured?

'He said the IRA would not get what they want and loyalists would remain British, 'despite all pressures from whatever quarter'. The Volunteers must remember all their dead, he said, and he read a list in couplets of forty-four names; twenty-two had died during the 1914-18 war while another twenty-two, with identical or almost identical names, were modern UVF men who had died between 1968 and 1975. He presented the names and read a poem, 'For the Fallen', ending with two minutes' silence.' (Garland, 2001: 191)

Spence's list of names, like many a memorial on the Shankill, equates dead soldiers of WWI and dead Loyalist paramilitaries. Yet to read this as the uncritical praising of the determination to engage in conflict would be wrong. He explicitly states that conflict should only be engaged in as a last resort and that many have died needlessly. Sending men to die in these circumstances is the 'criminal' behaviour of 'donkeys' – a clear allusion to the needless deaths of so many of the 'lions led by donkeys' in WWI. This suggests to us that the murals can be read in at least these two ways depending on the discourses available to their audiences. As both a celebration of war and also a sombre reminder of needless death caused by the 'donkeys' – Haig and his modern equivalents – Paisley and 'big house Unionism' would certainly fit the bill for many.

The questioning of authority and privilege was very much part of Spence's politics and this inspired the development and support of a left wing critique of the British establishment including the Unionist establishment. Spence later joined the PUP and the new memorial mural to their late leader Hugh Smyth (Fig.49) demonstrates this type of critique. Illustrated by an image of Smyth in his mayoral chains of office with City Hall in the background the words on the mural are Smyth's:

> Historically; Unionist politicians fed their electorate the myth that they were first class citizens… and without question the people believed them. Historically; Republican / Nationalist politicians fed their electorate the myth that they were second class citizens… and without question, the people believed them.

> In reality, the truth of the matter was that we all, Protestant and Catholic, were third class citizens, and none of us realised it!

Fig.49. Memorial mural to PUP leader Hugh Smyth, Shankill Road, Belfast, July 2016. © John Poulter

For the purposes of this research the most interesting element of the mural is that it is accompanied by one of the metal poppy crosses (Fig.50). A plaque explains that 'This Poppy Cross is in memory of Hugh Smyth OBE who served the people of the Shankill for 40 years on Belfast City Council. He died May 12th 2014.' Such sentiments, combined with the poppy

suggest that the move towards explicitly using the Somme as an example of establishment exploitation of the Loyalist working class may yet appear on the walls of the Shankill.

This Poppy Cross is in memory of

Hugh Smyth OBE

who served the people of the Shankill

for 40 years on Belfast City Council.

He died May 12th 2014.

Fig.50. Metal Poppy Cross commemorating Hugh Smyth, leader of the PUP and city councillor for the Shankill, Shankill Road, Belfast, November 2016. © John Poulter

The Shankill continues to be one of the most deprived areas in the UK. Unemployment is high and educational achievement low and, as mentioned above, one of the main functions

of the mass of memory work relating to the Somme and the Great War generally can be seen to be to provide ongoing solidarity, purpose and structure to organisations such as the UVF. This activity maintains identity and membership, maintains bonds of friendship and co-operation and also demonstrates an ongoing capacity to organise and act – to demonstrate the possession of power over the local landscape. It also enables a continuation, if diminished, of a role that constructs and displays masculinity. In conversation with some loyalists this is, on top of the decline in traditionally 'male' occupations in the city, one aspect of the changes facing the men in Loyalist communities that is of concern.

This exposes a potential negative aspect to the way in which Remembrance is being used to promote cross-community solidarities (chapter 9 details some of these). Whilst many Loyalists are engaging with nationalists upon the common ground of family and 'community' memory/ies of the Great War Jason Burke (2016) acknowledges that some are resentful at this 'intrusion' and he worries about the impact the potential loss of such a strong building block of identity could have on Loyalists. Such engagement could not only undermine Loyalist claims to a distinctive identity based on this history but also call into question the very meaning of that tragic history of loss. If this is shared with the rest of the population of the island what does that do to claims of debts owed and loyalty needing to be reciprocated? If it now has to be taken into account that the 'Irish' also 'sacrificed' their young men for the Crown how does their subsequent treatment at the hands of the British impact on claims to a debt owed? No debt appeared to be taken into account in the case of the Irish. No allowances were made for their 'sacrifice'. No autonomy was readily proffered to them by a grateful Crown. Why should the Loyalists expect special treatment and tolerance and support of their desires? The debt is worthless. The 'sacrifice' was for nothing.

Chapter 8   **Remembrance on the Falls Road**

The Falls and the Great War

When the Unionists formed an Anti-Home Rule militia, the Ulster Volunteer Force (UVF), in 1913, the Nationalists responded by establishing the Irish Volunteers (IV). With the outbreak of war in Europe John Redmond, leader of the Irish Volunteers offered them to the British government as a defensive garrison for Ireland thus freeing up the British battalions stationed on the island. His offer was declined. He then declared that the Volunteers would go to wherever the front line lay to demonstrate the loyalty of the Irish. His hope was that this would lead to a settling of the Home Rule issue in the Nationalists' favour. Carson, leader of the Unionists, offered the UVF as a ready-made Division in return for guarantees that tipped the Home Rule settlement his way i.e. partition of the island. The Irish Volunteers split over the issue but the vast majority agreed with Redmond. Only 11,000 sided with what would turn out to be some of the 'advanced nationalist' leaders of the 'Rising' two years later whilst 180,000 sided with Redmond and his 'constitutional nationalists'. It is estimated that around 200,000 Irishmen enlisted in the British Army during the Great War and at least half of these were Catholics and many were committed Nationalists. They went into the 16th (Irish) Division, the 10th (Irish) Division and many other regiments of the British Army as well as the navy. By the end of the war an estimated 35,000 had been killed and many more injured (Jeffery, 2000). The Great War, and its personal and social consequences, was therefore an experience shared by people across the island and, of course, beyond.

By the time the troops returned home, however, events in Ireland had changed the political landscape. A rebel parliament, guerrilla war with British forces, partition of the island and autonomy from Britain then followed, with more suffering and bloodshed along the way. In this context, as described in chapter 4, Remembrance quickly became marginalised in the 'Irish Free State' as it failed to fit with the new national story being constructed (Burke, 2004). Meanwhile, in the new statelet of Northern Ireland such commemoration came to be a key part of the declaration of Britishness by the Unionist population. Nationalist veterans were free to attend many Remembrance events but the sectarian overtones of Orangeism and the dominance of Protestantism in the proceedings would not have encouraged them to do so. Political events in the North led to an increasing separation of

the population amid discrimination, violence and what would today be described as 'ethnic cleansing' of the Catholic population to create a segregated and divided society (Farrell, 1976).

Hartley gives details of events involving the 'Irish Nationalist Veterans Association' (INVA) in the summer of 1920 which succinctly illustrate the situation. On Sunday 6th June 1920 the INVA attended a remembrance service they had organised to commemorate the men of the 16th (Irish) Division who had died at the battle of Messines ridge (where the Island of Ireland Peace Park now stands). They marched through Belfast, had a mass, paraded outside the church for inspection by a priest and then marched back accompanied by thousands of onlookers. Six weeks later they marched again, this time along the Falls Road as part of the funeral of six Catholics who had been shot when unionist mobs attacked Catholic areas. Two weeks later they boycotted a 'Peace Day Parade' in protest at the failure of the British government to implement Home Rule (Hartley, 2013: 253).

At the head of a chapter on the Irish Volunteers which addresses their numerous losses in the Great War, Gerry Adams, the President of Sinn Fein, quotes from the version of the old ballad 'The Foggy Dew' written by Charles O'Neill some time after the war: 'Oh had they died by Pearse's side [leader of the Easter Rising] / Or fallen by Cahal Brugha [Anti-Treaty Republican] / Their names we would keep where the Fenians sleep / 'Neath the shade of the foggy dew' (Adams, 2001: 35). Another line in the song runs: ''Twas better to die 'neath an Irish sky than at Suvla or Sud-El-Bar'. Both these were the site of heavy losses for the 10th (Irish) Division in Gallipoli in 1915. For Republicans this summed up their feelings about these deaths in British uniforms.

This attitude can also be seen in the fact that the only book on the Great War in the books section of the Sinn Féin shop on the Falls at the time of one of my visits was Liam O'Flaherty's (1929) *Return of the Brute* in which the Irish soldier in the British Army, amidst the carnage of war and inhumanity of British military discipline, descends to a level of barbarity. This narrative accords with other texts of the time that were critical of the war but goes beyond, for instance, the anger of Remarque at the generational betrayal of the doomed youths of *All Quiet on the Western Front* to rage at not only the loss of life but also the loss of humanity of men dragged into someone else's bloody war.

Republican Remembrance

The first clear signifier of commemoration one sees when travelling up the Falls Road from the city centre is a memorial garden whose wrought iron archway over the gates proclaims it as a 'Garden of Remembrance' (Figs.51,52,53,54,55)

Fig.51. Garden of Remembrance, Falls Road, 2006. ©

Fig.52. IRA Memorial to 'D' Company, Garden of Remembrance, Falls Road, 2006. © John Poulter

This is definitely not a memorial to British troops, however, but rather to those that they killed during the Troubles. Dominating the garden is a large marble memorial 'Erected by the Falls Road Cultural Society' and commemorating the members of 'D Company, 2nd Battalion, Irish Republican Army'. It lists names and dates of death starting in 1920 and ending in 1992. To the left beneath Celtic design a woman holds the lifeless body of a young man above the famous words of the leader of the 1916 Easter Rising, Patrick Pearse, spoken in his oration at the graveside of the Fenian Donovan O'Rossa: 'The fools, the fools, the fools! They have left us our Fenian dead, and while Ireland holds these graves Ireland unfree shall never be at peace.' Here is evident the demand being made of the future on behalf of the dead. It is also a statement that mobilises these deaths in sustaining the struggle.

Fig.53. Mural showing street map of Falls, IRA Garden of Remembrance, Falls Road, November 2013. © John Poulter

Fig.54. Easter Lilies mark the location of deaths of IRA Volunteers on Active Service, Mural showing street map of Falls, IRA Garden of Remembrance, Falls Road, November 2013. © John Poulter

Fig.55. IRA Memorial citing Pearse's oration for Donovan O'Rossa, Garden of Remembrance, Falls Road, 2006. © John Poulter

Other monuments around the garden commemorate: Republican hunger strikers; those volunteers who died on 'Active Service'; the POWs from the area; those POWs who have since died of natural causes; and the civilians from the area who died as a result of the Troubles. As one memorial sums it up, it is dedicated: 'to the men, women and children of

this community who stood united, resolute and in defiance of the British war machine.' The garden is in beautiful condition. Tricolours fly from flagpoles and water from the fountain does its best to drown out the noise of the busy road nearby. The Garden is the focal point for Republican rituals commemorating the Easter Rising of 1916 and the service of the volunteers of 'D Company' of the IRA (see e.g. Irish News 28.3.16 and Parades Commission website).

The Garden shares not only the function of other war memorials but also some of the specific language of Remembrance as practised by the British. The same use of this lexicon can be seen a little further up the road and down Conway Street at the 'Eileen Hickey Irish Republican History Museum' in the Conway Mill complex. It is a fascinating example of the role of museums in the construction of discourses of nation and identity (Bennett, 1995). It contains a detailed display of the archive of republican incarceration. A 'Republican Women's Roll of Honour' lists 18 women who died in the period 1971-1992 and is titled 'The Supreme Sacrifice' and at the bottom 'In Remembrance'. An embroidered memorial to two republicans is also titled 'Remembrance'. Use of such terms can also be seen in published works commemorating civilians from the Nationalist/Republican community killed by the British Army. For example, the dedication in a book of poetry to the dead of Bloody Sunday describes them as 'the fallen' (Campbell and Herron, 2008). We share a vocabulary of martial death which is extended to all who 'fall' 'in the cause'. What qualifies need not be clear support for this cause but, as on the Shankill, simply death at the hands of its enemies i.e. the British Army and other 'Crown Forces'. That the language of Remembrance is shared is unsurprising. Nationalists might not typically engage with the texts and rituals of Remembrance but it would be hard to avoid experiencing them so much do they suffuse British media every November. In addition to this one must acknowledge the foundational influence of biblical knowledge and rituals of the Eucharist in religious ceremonies for both Roman Catholics and many Protestants that include the words attributed to Jesus at the 'Last supper' – 'Do this in Remembrance of me'. For those acculturated into a Christian society the rituals of Remembrance reaffirm our belief in the restorative power of the sacrifice of life. The meaning of such 'sacrifice' is premediated (Erll, 2010: 392) by the discourse of Christianity. One of the possible meanings of such events is presented for use and offers the comfort of an explanatory and redemptive narrative. Such a narrative then becomes myth (Barthes 1972) as it is naturalised and thus depoliticised. We are thus encouraged to see 'patriotic' death as naturally sacred and redemptive. This forestalls questions of failures of political leaders on all sides.

Whilst paramilitaries on the Shankill have worked to construct an equivalence between the soldier of the Great War and the Loyalist paramilitary those on the Falls have likened themselves to the rebels of Ireland's past and particularly 1916. In the current era of 'demilitarisation' of murals the fighters of the Troubles have often been replaced by elements from this earlier age. What connects all of these heroes of the past is their death for the cause. The most ancient of these is Cú Chulainn, the Iron Age warrior of legend. A sanitised version of the exploits of this 'beserker' was popularised in the early years of the Irish Free State and subsequently much discursive construction went into the building of an equivalence between him, Patrick Pearse, the leader of the 1916 rebels, and, later, Bobby Sands, the other hunger strikers and IRA fighters more generally (for a fuller explanation of this process see Poulter 2009b). A further equivalence stood unspoken behind all of these – that between Cú Chulainn and Christ. The statue of the warrior that stands in the rebels' headquarters, the Dublin GPO, and which has been reproduced on coins, stamps, memorials and countless murals could easily be mistaken for a scene from the death of Christ. It is a redolent of both representations of the crucifixion and the Pieta, Christ taken down from the cross. This mediation of Cú Chulainn / Christ offers 'him' up as the exemplar through which death by the enemies of Ireland is then premediated.

Great War memorials on the Falls

At the other end of the Falls lies Milltown Cemetery. This is the Roman Catholic burial ground used since 1869 when the RC Bishop of Down and Connor failed to gain control of who could be buried in the RC plot in Belfast City Cemetery a few hundred metres down the road. This could have resulted in suicides, still-born babies, converts to Protestantism, or the excommunicated being able to be buried there – going against Catholic canon law. In this new cemetery there would not be the potential for such problematic burials and also no need now to finish the three metre deep underground wall being built in the City Cemetery at the instruction of the Bishop to separate the RC dead from their equally dead Protestant neighbours (Hartley 2014: 4). Dividing walls have a long, and sometimes surreal, history in Belfast.

On first visiting the 'Cross of Sacrifice' Great War memorial in Milltown cemetery in November 2009 it was clear to me that here was a monument of little relevance to the local population and users of the space. The republican plots nearby, and particularly the

Provisional IRA plot, were full of 'life' (Figs.56,57,58,59). Colourful floral tributes abounded along with numerous personal messages and mementoes. The tricolour flew on its flag-post and the gold engravings of the Proclamation of the Republic were accompanied by brightly decorated Easter Lilies.

Fig.56. IRA plot, Milltown Cemetery, Falls Road, Belfast, July 2013. © John Poulter

Fig.57. IRA plot, Proclamation, Easter lily, tricolour, (1981 Hunger Strikers stone on left) Milltown Cemetery, Falls Road, Belfast, July 2013. © John Poulter

Fig.58. Memorial to the 1981 Hunger Strikers, with Easter lily, IRA plot, Milltown Cemetery, Falls Road, Belfast, July 2013. © John Poulter

Fig.59. Memorial to INLA/IRSP, Milltown Cemetery, Falls Road, Belfast, July 2013. © John Poulter

Fig.60. Great War memorial, Milltown Cemetery, Falls Road, Belfast, November 2009. © John Poulter

 The contrast with the memorial to the dead of the First World War was stark (Fig.60). Its grey stone bore no flowers. No flag flew. Wheelie bins (dumpsters) stood by its side. The engraving on the attached wall explained that the monument was 'In memory of those who gave their lives in the Great War and who lie buried in this cemetery' but the words had

been scratched over with a game of noughts-and-crosses (tic-tac-toe). The other panels listing the sparse details of the dead had also been defaced. On one of them was graffiti which, at first, I took to be expressing Republican sentiments on this imperial monument (Fig.61). However, it turned out to be the 'IBA', a local youth gang, rather than the IRA that was being publicised.

 'Mousie' I assume to be the writer's nom de plume. UTH stands for 'Up The Hoods' – supporting the 'hoods' or local 'delinquent' youth engaged in 'anti-social behaviour' and petty crime. IBA denotes 'I'd Buck (Fuck) Anything' – the name of a local notorious hood gang. Finally FTRA translates as 'Fuck the Ra (IRA)' – a message to their enemies i.e. the local Republican moral guardians/vigilantes. For the point I am making here it is significant that this message, and the game, were scrawled on this monument to those who died serving in the British Armed Forces in the Great War and not on the conveniently nearby memorial, complete with flagpole, flag, dozens of floral tributes and carefully tended surroundings, in memory of those members of the Provisional IRA who died fighting the British Army. The IRA monument is protected by its status as a 'live' and sacred monument for many in the local community and, of course, particularly those who would bring down retribution on any who defiled it. The war memorial appears to have no such protection.

Fig.61. Graffiti on Screen Wall by Cross of Sacrifice WWI memorial, Milltown Cemetery, Falls Road, Belfast, November 2009. © John Poulter

This was a monument that had become irrelevant to the local population. It hadn't even been more than casually damaged. It had faded into the landscape like so many of the unattended older graves in the cemetery. The 'memories' the monument was intended to

act as a focus and support for had failed to attach themselves to it. Without such 'live' landmarks the memory had also faded (Bastide, 2011: 158).

Visiting again the following year I found that 'Wankers' had been scrawled beneath the names of the dead (Fig.62). Many of the family graves in the cemetery feature the phrase 'Murdered by British Forces'. At the bottom of the cemetery I found a row of sixteen airmen's graves of which seven were Polish. Each one had a Remembrance cross in front of it as well as flowers and a small red candle holder. The grass at every war grave scattered around the cemetery had also been cut.

Fig.62. 'Wankers' graffiti on screen wall of Great War memorial, Milltown Cemetery, Falls Road, Belfast, November 2010. © John Poulter.

This variety of signifiers demonstrates the range of such phenomena that work in the discursive construction of Remembrance and the variety of actors and sources of power involved in their production. The grass is cut because of funding from the governmental-level CWGC. The words in stone were either chiselled under instruction from and paid for by grieving and angry families or scratched by an anonymous individual braving discovery and possible punishment. The Remembrance Crosses, flowers and candle holders were placed in front of the airmen's graves by individuals or groups as yet unknown (but see

below). Closure on their meaning thus had to be deferred. This is the permanent condition of the ethnographer. It only seems to resolve in moments of apparent enlightenment. Otherwise one is constantly living and exemplifying Derrida's (1982) observation on *différance* – the indeterminancy and constant deferral of meaning. Deferral is obvious: one is usually aware that although a meaning is apparent in the text or practice under observation subsequent experiences of other phenomena will lead to an expansion, re-evaluation, correction, or complete abandonment of this reading. Indeterminacy is less obvious. Meaning, being relational, is constantly being constructed from the differences between signs and the ways in which they are used to illustrate, express and shape power and social relations. Shifts in meaning of any sign result in shifts for many more. And this both destructive and creative process also collapses time. Meanings change as ripples move both outward synchronically and back and forth diachronically. Fixed meanings of the past become uprooted and forced adrift in the wake of tremors in the present and vice versa.

In the City Cemetery the headstones of Commonwealth war graves had been vandalised in the most violent decade of the Troubles, the 1970s, and 370 had been removed and put into storage. These were quietly and steadily replaced in the period 2002-2006 after consultation with Sinn Féin's Tom Hartley (interview with Hartley 2013). As well as individual CWGC graves dotted amongst the family headstones there are also three more obvious sites of Great War memory. In the middle of a small roundabout in the middle of the cemetery stands a Cross of Sacrifice. In its shadow lie two rows of CWGC graves. Numbering about 50 they are mainly from WWII but a handful are from the earlier conflict. A couple of hundred metres from this near the edge of the cemetery stands a memorial 'screen wall'. Some 20 metres long and a metre high its sloped top is engraved with the names of Great War soldiers buried nearby. At its centre it rises to double height to accommodate a large recessed cross and the words common to all 'Remembrance Stones' in CWGC cemeteries 'Their Name Liveth for Evermore'.

I first visited this cemetery in 2010. The screen wall had a lump smashed or blown out of it. The remains of a fire at the spot had left the molten plastic of a road cone running, like blood, through the inscribed names (Figs.63,64). On the central panel someone had written FTONH (Fuck the Oglaigh na hEireann, a newly emerged splinter 'dissident' Republican group using the traditional Irish name for the IRA) (Fig.65). Like the FTRA in Milltown the contempt is aimed at the local moral 'police'. The Cross of Sacrifice nearby had also had a

lump taken out of it by some sort of attack at some time (Fig.66). No wreaths, poppies or Remembrance crosses had been laid at either monument. Next to the Cross at the lines of war graves I found, on the last graves before the path that heads off down through the cemetery to the exit, a few scattered poppies and some worn Remembrance crosses. As I left I passed a young couple. When I turned to take a picture of the Cross from a distance the young man had climbed upon it. Texts gain their meaning through use and his use of this memorial was very different from that envisaged by its architect. 'Death of the Architect' (ala Barthes) and Remembrance Sunday on the Falls Road.

Fig.63. Molten plastic bleeds over the damaged screen wall Great War memorial, Belfast City Cemetery, Falls Road, Belfast, November 2010. © John Poulter

Fig.64. Damage to rear of screen wall Great War memorial, Belfast City Cemetery, Falls Road, Belfast, November 2010. © John Poulter

Fig.65. FTONH (top left) Grafitti on screen wall Great War memorial, Belfast City Cemetery, Falls Road, Belfast, November 2010. © John Poulter

Fig.66. Damage to Cross of Sacrifice Great War memorial, Belfast City Cemetery, Falls Road, Belfast, November 2010. © John Poulter

Fig.67. Cross of Sacrifice Great War memorial, rows of CWGC graves in background, Belfast City Cemetery, Falls Road, Belfast, November 2010. © John Poulter

In November 2011 the grass was cut again on the war graves in Milltown (Fig.68) and the War Memorial cleaned up (Fig69). All the scratched graffiti had been erased and the monument looked newer, fresher, and more present in the landscape. Down at the line of airmen's graves (Fig.70) red and white roses had been placed at every one, an orange rose at many (but no obvious reason for which) and then a little wreath –a few poppies in the middle of white flowers and a card reading 'Sandy Row Cultural Society' also a Remembrance cross from them (Figs.71,72,73). Sandy Row is a small Loyalist area in South Belfast. This incursion of Loyalism into this space on the Republican Falls was surprising and the form of the wreath puzzling. Meaning would once again have to be deferred.
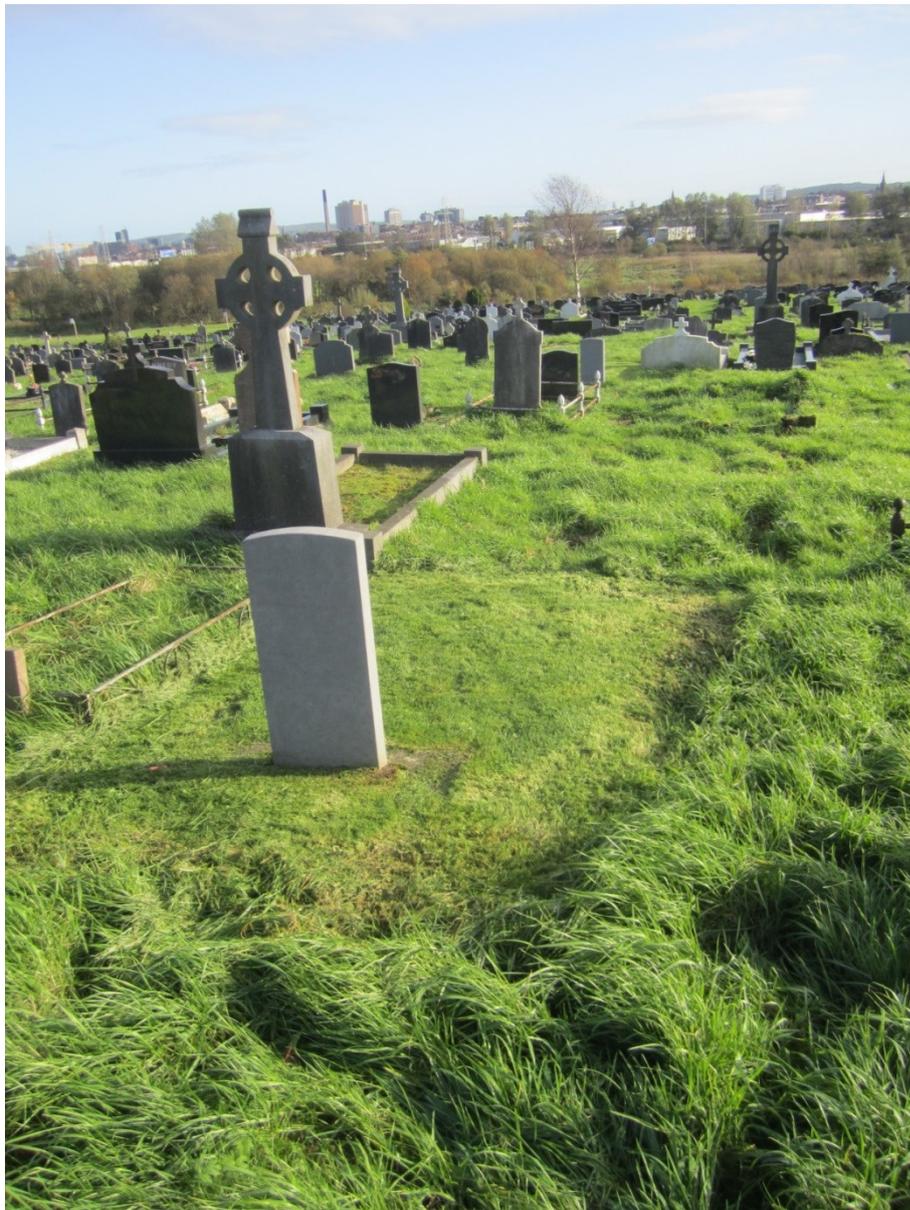
Fig.68. Grass cut on CWGC graves, Milltown Cemetery, Falls Road, Belfast, November 2011. © John Poulter

Fig.69. Restored Great War memorial, Milltown Cemetery, Falls Road, Belfast, November 2011. © John Poulter

Fig.70. Red & White (and some orange) roses, Airmen's CWGC graves, Milltown Cemetery, Falls Road, Belfast, November 2011. © John Poulter

Fig.71. Red & White floral tribute (including poppies) from Sandy Row Cultural Society, Airmen's CWGC graves, Milltown Cemetery, Falls Road, Belfast, November 2011. © John Poulter

Fig.72. Remembrance Cross from Sandy Row Cultural Society, Airmen's CWGC graves, Milltown Cemetery, Falls Road, Belfast, November 2011. © John Poulter

Fig.73. Remembrance Crosses and floral tributes (including from Sandy Row Cultural Society), between Polish and British airmen's CWGC graves, Milltown Cemetery, Falls Road, Belfast, November 2011. © John Poulter

At the City Cemetery the FTONH on the screen wall had been scrubbed off and other, apparently less challenging, graffiti had replaced it (Fig.74). This monument was functioning as a local palimpsest recording various aspects of local history but as far as its original purpose and meaning go it had not been canonized but marginalised, ignored and become part of the archive. It was a trace of an awkward fact. There had been another fire (fig.75). The Cross of Sacrifice now had a Remembrance cross on all four sides and at the war graves there were six Remembrance crosses (Fig.76) and 104 scattered poppies! (Fig.77)

Fig.74. Banal (?) graffiti Screen wall Great War memorial, Belfast City Cemetery, Falls Road, Belfast, November 2011. © John Poulter

Fig.75. Fire damage next to Cross of Sacrifice Great War memorial, Belfast City Cemetery, Falls Road, Belfast, November 2012. © John Poulter

Fig.76. Remembrance Cross at CWGC graves, Belfast City Cemetery, Falls Road, Belfast, November 2011. © John Poulter

Fig.77. Scattered poppies at CWGC graves, Belfast City Cemetery, Falls Road, Belfast, November 2011. © John Poulter

How was I to read this? I walked back down the Falls mulling over possible meanings and went to the Cenotaph by City Hall. As I took photographs of the Remembrance Crosses I got talking to a man doing the same. From the personal information he gave me I was sure he

was a Protestant. I mentioned what I had just seen at the war graves in the City Cemetery and he told me that in his part of Northern Ireland (he named it and it was not Belfast) he goes into cemeteries in Catholic areas and places a poppy on any war grave. 'You wouldn't always want to be seen doing it though' he added, unnecessarily. It strengthened my suspicions that the poppies had been scattered by a 'visitor' rather than a 'local'.

This is an example of the value of opportunistic sampling (Patton, 1990: 179). In order to research the traces of the Great War in the cemeteries on the Falls I had read both books on them by the local expert, and Sinn Féin politician, Tom Hartley. I had also interviewed him. Without connecting with this stranger at the Cenotaph, however, I would not have gained a valuable insight into the complexity of attributing 'authors' to some of the texts and practices of Remembrance in the region. Behaving in a way that encourages such interactions and the sharing of such confidences enables opportunistic sampling. Connections made in such circumstances can sometimes then be very productively exploited to produce snowball sampling that would have been very difficult or unlikely without the help of this initial gatekeeper.

Up at the City Cemetery in July 2012 a large FTONH had been painted on the screen wall but the NH had been almost successfully scrubbed off (Fig.78). The crime was clearly not defacing the monument and disrespecting the dead but rather disrespecting the very much alive local dissident Republicans (ONH = Oglaigh na hEireann = (dissident) IRA).

Fig.78. 'FT…' graffiti on screen wall Great War memorial, Belfast City Cemetery, Falls Road, Belfast, July 2012. © John Poulter

In November in Milltown Cemetery the war memorial was still free of graffiti and the damage to the steps had also been repaired. In the City Cemetery, however, there were various minor bits of graffiti and evidence of another fire on the screen wall. Along the base of the wall lay cans, broken bottles and what looked like a plastic bottle adapted for inhaling cannabis smoke. There had been another fire by the Cross of Sacrifice, more broken bottles lay around and some apparently banal graffiti had appeared on the steps. There were two Remembrance crosses but no poppies scattered amongst the war graves. The FT on the screen wall was fading but down the Road the Kieran Nugent mural, in an unexposed sidestreet, was now the site for these sentiments: 'FTONH and the PSNI' both the unofficial and official police forces attacked. The fact that this was placed on a Republican mural celebrating the actions of the first 'Blanketman' was very significant. If most of the graffiti on the war memorials had been either casual or merely using the surface as a handy canvas this was quite deliberately placed to offend and challenge. It was a show of power and sign of the possible dwindling power of the Republicans.

By the following year the screen wall in the City Cemetery had been cleaned up. FT had finally gone. There was no more evidence of fires. At the Cross of Sacrifice there was one Remembrance cross and no poppies at the war graves. At Milltown the War Memorial was still clean and there was another small bouquet of dog daisies resting upon it.

I returned to Belfast in July 2016, symbolically the most important year of this commemorative decade. There were no poppies at either cemetery, no flowers at the War Memorial in Milltown and nothing down by the row of airmen's graves except some red and white flowers against the middle headstone.

At the City Cemetery in November 2016 there were no scattered poppies and only one Remembrance Cross at the war graves. The cross was clean but a trail bike had ridden across the grass surrounding it leaving a deep furrow. At the screen wall there was no evidence of any further fires, nor any evidence of drinking or drug taking. The wall was completely clean of graffiti. And there was a poppy wreath leant up against the centre of it. I had never seen this before. I went to investigate its origins. As soon as I saw where it had come from I took my photos quickly and moved on. I did not want someone to see me there and conclude that I was responsible for the wreath. It was from the 1st Shankill Somme Association aka the 1st Battalion of the UVF (Fig.79).

Fig.79. 1st Shankill Somme Association (UVF) poppy wreath against screen wall Great War memorial, Belfast City Cemetery, Falls Road, Belfast, November 2016. © John Poulter

I had just come from watching over a thousand UVF members march into the Gardens of Remembrance at City Hall in Belfast. A few days earlier they had stopped the traffic for a paramilitary-style funeral of one of their leaders. Was this another example of them showing their power? To be able to come into the heart of Republican West Belfast and

leave this wreath with their insignia on it? Or had this happened with the agreement and involvement of Republicans?

The War Memorials have been cleaned up and repaired and appear to be 'protected' or at least in some way 'off limits' to the graffitiers. What can we read into the abuse they previously suffered? Little of the graffiti appeared aimed at the British dead except perhaps the 'Wankers'. It seems likely that the only reason the damage was done to these structures was because their design encouraged their use as shelters against the wind and rain. The repeated FTRA/FTONH is aimed at those locals 'policing' the area and potentially spoiling their fun / threatening their wellbeing. Is it significant that such anti-paramilitary slogans should be scrawled on a war memorial, albeit to a different group of soldiers? Perhaps. And what of the violent damage done to them at some time? Clearly they once acted as a focus for anti-British Army sentiment in the same way as the headstones in the City Cemetery in the 1970s. The damage I saw over recent years was far less focused, violent and political and much more casual: an apparent by-product of careless juvenile fun.

The monuments had become irrelevant to the community. Attempts had been made to clean them up and repair them but they still had little if any role in the collective memory and thus group identity of the local nationalist/republican population. They were not acting as *lieux de mémoire* for the local population. Some sort of education, possibly accompanied by threats, had seemed to have impressed upon the graffiti scrawlers that these memorials were off limits. But this seemed to have only worked to the extent that it might with the headstones on other family's graves. They were not to be damaged but they meant nothing more. They had no place within their lives or hearts. They were not part of their story.

Their cleaned up appearance did signify, like the returning headstones, a change in attitudes amongst Republicans towards the memory of the Great War. This does not equate to a reappraisal of their typical perspective on it as an imperial struggle between elites who exploited those, like the Irish poor, who stood to gain little from such conflict whatever the outcome. Rather it is an increased understanding of the usefulness of the signifying practices and texts of this memory in the choreography of the politics of the present.

Republican/Irish engagement with Remembrance of the Great War

Over the course of the last twenty years 'Irish' engagement with the memory of the Great War has advanced so far that it now includes the active involvement of not only heads of the government of the Irish Republic but also prominent Republicans in acts of Remembrance. A new confidence in the Republic to engage with the Great War, was due, Orr (interview with author 2013) argues, to increased secularism, shared membership and co-operation with the British within the European Union, economic growth, government participation in the Northern Ireland Peace Process and a new self-confidence in dealing with the British government. It led the President, Mary McAleese, to claim that 'the blindfolds and blinkers of traditional allegiances are being lifted' (1998). Irish government support for the Island of Ireland Peace Park enabled her to open this with Queen Elizabeth a few weeks later and provide material proof of the change represented by the Good Friday (Belfast) Agreement signed earlier that year. The Taoiseach Bertie Ahern subsequently (2001) acknowledged that the Republic now 'had the national self-confidence to recognise that our past has many strands, and [...] it is important for the future of Ireland in the 21st century that we have an inclusive attitude to all our traditions'.

Involvement of representatives of the Irish government in acts of remembrance preceded this (Leonard, 1996) and had grown since the attack on Enniskillen in 1987. The President's patronage, and the government's support, of the exhibition of the Royal Dublin Fusiliers in Dublin enabled such 'apolitical' groups to enjoy huge success in promoting this long-forgotten story (Burke, 2013: 104). Such support was aimed at persuading the Unionist population of the North that a united Ireland should not be something they should fear (Mallie and McKittrick, 2002: 126).

For Republicans, however, there was danger in appearing overly comfortable with the imperial past displayed as part of Remembrance. Not all in the Republican movement were happy with the direction in which Sinn Fein were taking the 'struggle'. Military action and abstentionism had long been central and sacrosanct parts of their strategy. These were now being dropped. Any apparent softening of perspective on the 'occupying' British Army could lead to disintegration of the movement and rejection of both the Peace Process and the leadership of Sinn Fein. One Belfast republican comments that: 'When I first got involved in the Messines [Island of Ireland Peace Park] project I faced open hostility from people within the Republican movement – I was called a traitor, an apologist for imperialism…' (Hall, 2007: 28). Indeed the outrage in the Republic (McDaniel, 1997: 192) at

the PIRA attack on the Remembrance Sunday ceremony at Enniskillen in 1987 was not shared by many Republicans in West Belfast. Anthony McIntyre, a former PIRA volunteer, recalls that there was no great revulsion at the attack and that in fact some celebrated it as an appropriate response to previous RUC and Army attacks on Republican commemorative parades and funerals (2011). Such attacks were also carried out by Loyalist paramilitaries. Ten years before Enniskillen a UVF bomb attack on an IRA funeral on the Falls Road had killed a 10 year-old boy (Taylor, 1999: 156). That such attacks occurred and could be seen to have constituted precedent for and motivated desire for the bombing at Enniskillen was not mentioned in any reporting I have seen on the killings.

Alex Maskey's laying of a laurel wreath at Belfast cenotaph in 2002 when he was mayor was a huge step forward for Republicanism in terms of engagement with Remembrance. It also made it more accessible for the whole nationalist community. Maskey received much criticism from within the Republican movement but the Sinn Fein Ard Fheis (annual party conference) rejected a motion criticising the gesture (McCaffrey, 2003: 165).

To understand the context in which events on the Falls Road occur one needs to be aware of developments not only at Belfast City Hall but also in the Republic of Ireland and beyond. My first trip to research Remembrance in Dublin occurred in November of 2005. I attended the Remembrance Sunday service at St Patrick's Church of Ireland Cathedral at which President McAleese laid a wreath of laurels amongst a sea of poppies (Fig.80).

Fig.80. President McAleese's laurel wreath amongst a sea of poppies, St Patrick's Cathedral, Dublin, November 2005. © John Poulter

The cathedral is one of the safe semi-private Protestant spaces that Leonard (1996) described as the refuge of Remembrance in the Republic. It is a time-capsule of imperial texts and is packed with memorials, plaques and regimental flags commemorating and celebrating the British Empire.

This was the venue for the most important piece of opportunistic sampling of my entire research into this topic. I got talking to someone there who then introduced me to a member of the Royal Dublin Fusiliers Association. After an interview and tour of some fascinating *lieux de mémoire* in Trinity College Dublin with him he introduced me to the founder of the RDFA, Tom Burke. Once I had met and interviewed Burke at length he subsequently provided me with contact details for several of the key individuals involved in the politics and performance of Remembrance in Northern Ireland. He was a crucial gatekeeper whose trust and support opened the path to successful research for me. Research in such an environment is very dependent on trust. This has to be earnt and this involves openness.

McAleese came north to the Somme Heritage Centre outside Belfast in 2007, laid a wreath and used the occasion to have a first handshake with the hardline Unionist and leader of the Democratic Unionist Party (DUP) Ian Paisley who had, by then, become First Minister of the Northern Ireland Assembly (Adamson, 2013: 96). Such coming together using the past was not universally appreciated. That November bomb alerts at Newry and Enniskillen on Remembrance Sunday demonstrated the desire by some 'dissident' republicans to reject and disrupt the ritual.

The following year a new memorial was officially opened by McAleese – the Mayo Peace Park at Castlebar. In 2009 a new memorial was unveiled at Killarney and the following year saw another at Suvla Bay, Gallipoli. This was the year that McAleese visited the war graves of the 10th (Irish) Division there and laid a wreath of laurels (Fig.81). Visiting this site on the Turkish coast just after this in the April of 2010 I found a symbolic synthesis of paper poppies and a shamrock badge in a small box behind the President's wreath (Fig.82). This unity echoed hopes she had declared that the redressing of the 'deficit of remembrance' would enable 'healing memory' to tackle division on the island (Ward, 2013: 36).

Fig.81. President McAleese's laurel wreath with other poppy wreaths, Green Hill CWGC cemetery, Gallipoli, Turkey, April 2010. © John Poulter

Fig.82. Poppy and shamrock badges together, Green Hill CWGC cemetery, Gallipoli, Turkey, April 2010. © John Poulter

The following July, 2012, a laurel wreath was laid for the first time at Belfast Cenotaph by an Irish government representative. This was the obvious focus for television and press photographers (Fig.83). The card attached is careful to point out that the wreath is commemorating those who died at the battle of the Somme. This form of Remembrance safely excludes the presence and activities of the British Army in Ireland, even in 1916.

Fig.83. Media focus on the Laurel wreath laid by Irish government representative, Belfast cenotaph, Belfast, July 2012. © John Poulter

Three of the poppy wreaths present with it on the steps of the monument refer to people being murdered by the IRA. One of them cites Sinn Féin, 'sworn enemies of Ulster', 'rather' than the IRA as the killers. Could this be read as a reaction to the unwanted presence of the 'Irish' at 'their' sacred space and ritual? The previous November there had been just two such references (example Fig.84). When I returned later the same day several UVF/Somme Association wreaths had appeared. Other wreaths had been moved so that these Loyalist ones could be placed directly around the laurels of the Irish wreath (Fig.85).

Fig.84. 'Murdered by Sinn Fein IRA', Poppy wreath commemorating Treasurer of Dunmurry

Ulster Clubs, Belfast Cenotaph, Belfast, November 2011. © John Poulter.

Fig.85. Loyalist wreaths 'reframe' the Irish government's laurel wreath, Belfast Cenotaph, Belfast, July 2012. © John Poulter

This was a clear decision to reframe, quite literally, the presence and meaning of the Irish token. The other wreaths metonymically signified those institutions of civil society that might bristle at but not challenge the presence of this 'foreign' and 'hostile' power. The wreaths of the UVF not only metonymically signified the presence of militant Loyalism but

their surrounding of the Irish laurels metaphorically signified their vigilance and defiance at a time of rapprochement and supposed reconciliation.

My next visit to the cenotaph was early on the morning of 1st July 2013. The then mayor of Belfast was a Republican, Sinn Fein's Máirtín Ó'Muilleoir. Following on from Alex Maskey's original gesture, and in the footsteps of Republican mayors since, he was laying a wreath of laurels two hours before the usual 11am ceremony to mark the anniversary of the first day of the battle of the Somme. Like many Republicans Ó'Muilleoir has family connections with the British Army. His great-grandfather, Company Sergeant Major John McManus, died fighting in a British Army uniform in the Great War. His funeral in the summer of 1916 was the last British Army military funeral held on the Falls Road (Hartley, 2014:253). There were only two other people present as I waited for the ceremony and one of them was the technician setting up the PA for the main event. The ceremony is so low-key that I almost missed it. They were halfway down the approach to the cenotaph before I realised they had emerged from City Hall. The mayor was in front carrying a laurel wreath and wearing a smart suit and his chains of office. He was followed by seven other councillors. They were fairly smartly dressed. I recognised Tom Hartley amongst them in a brown corduroy jacket with tie.

They halted before the steps and the mayor then went forward to lay the wreath (Fig.86). He then stepped back and all in the party nodded their heads. He rejoined them, they turned around and walked back into City Hall (Fig.87). Only the two of us and maybe the technician had watched this happen. It was just after 9.00 on a Sunday morning in Belfast. The city had not yet come alive. This ritual was clearly not one that currently attracted engagement, even if only in opposition, from the people of the city.

Fig.86. Sinn Fein's Máirtín Ó'Muilleoir wearing his Mayoral chains of office walks forward to lay a laurel wreath at Belfast cenotaph, other Sinn Féin councillors in attendance. 9.00 July 1 2013. © John Poulter

The other observer was Phillip Orr, the author of the seminal *The Road to the Somme* (1987) which challenged the myth of the Somme that had become established within the population of Northern Ireland and is often cited as a key influence on many thinkers on the subject both within the ranks of researchers and writers and also the paramilitaries. Jason Burke (2016) relates how it was widely read within Long Kesh with pages from one copy displayed on the walls. I spent the next three hours interviewing Orr and Hartley. Before the main ceremony at 11.00 the laurel wreath was moved to the back of the cenotaph. This was not a snub. This always happens to any wreaths that are placed here before the main event. In my experience this is always wreaths from the Associated Apprentice Boys of Derry, the Belfast Telegraph and the triangular tribute of pink carnations commemorating the Pink Triangles (the homosexual prisoners in the Nazi death camps who had to wear this emblem). The only year that I do not see these here is 2016. I wonder if the new mood of illiberalism sweeping the UK and beyond is the reason? Has someone removed the triangle. The poppy wreath from the Belfast Telegraph is also missing. I don't know. Deferral. It also happens to any UVF wreaths if their parade precedes

the official 11.00 ceremony. When I returned to the cenotaph after the interviews a wreath of laurels is present amongst the poppies at the front. It has been laid by an Irish government minister. None of the other wreaths present mention murders by the IRA. Later that day a UVF parade featuring period costume comes to the cenotaph and wreaths are laid. They are not placed around the incongruous laurels of the Irish wreath this year.

Fig.87. The Sinn Féin wreath-laying party head back to City Hall in a deserted Garden of Remembrance, Belfast, 9.00 July 1 2013. © John Poulter

In November of 2013 the laurel wreath at the main Remembrance Sunday ceremony at the Belfast cenotaph was laid by Irish Tánaiste (Deputy Prime Minister) Eamon Gilmore. This laurel wreath, and its higher profile bearer, at the cenotaph appeared to generate an even greater number of mentions of IRA murder this year. The Taoiseach Enda Kenny, meanwhile, laid a wreath at Enniskillen. The following year a Cross of Sacrifice was dedicated in Glasnevin Cemetery, Dublin. By this time the Irish Government sponsored 'Decade of Centenaries' was well under way. This wide-ranging collection of initiatives is aimed at managing the commemoration of several key events in 'Irish' history. The 'Decade' starts with the commemoration of the signing by half a million Unionists of the Solemn League and Covenant pledging resistance to Home Rule in September 1912. It goes

on to include the subsequent raising of the Ulster Volunteers and the Irish Volunteers the following year. The centenary of the Dublin Lockout and riots also falls that year. 1914 brought the start of the Great War and 1915 saw particularly high losses for the Irish at Gallipoli. 1916 is the year that sits like a freestanding volcano on the plain of collective memory in Ireland. Commemoration of the 50th anniversary of the Easter Rising contributed to events in Belfast including riots that can be argued (see e.g. Tom Burke, 2016; Orr, 2016) to have increased the potential for further violence and unrest which lead to the outbreak of the Troubles proper by the end of the 1960s. Avoiding a repeat of such events was important for the government but it also needed to make a sufficient show of commemoration to avoid an increasingly successful Sinn Féin party from being able to monopolise it as its own glorious past. Only a few weeks after this would come the centenary of the first day of the battle of the Somme – a key memory site in Unionist memory. After this the 'Decade' would head on to the Great War's ending, the establishment of the First Dáil, the guerrilla war with England, the Treaty and then probably the most difficult centenaries as the Irish people dealt with competing collective memories of the civil war. This will be made all the more difficult and potentially explosive because of the fact that the two main political parties in the Republic, Fine Gael and Fianna Fáil, emerged from the two competing sides.

The centenaries of events of the Great War, within this, have led to documentaries, performances, exhibitions, debates as well as commemorative ceremonies. Knowledge of this past has most definitely now been brought out of the archive and placed into the canon (A. Assman 2010) of 'the' collective memory of the nation.

In November 2014 Taoiseach, Enda Kenny TD, for the third year in a row took part in a Remembrance Sunday ceremony in Enniskillen. The Tánaiste, Joan Burton TD, attended the Remembrance Sunday service in St Patrick's Cathedral, Dublin, and Ireland's Ambassador to the UK, Dan Mulhall, was at the Cenotaph in London. It was the first time Ireland had been represented at this ceremony since 1946.

In July 2016 the Irish President, Michael D. Higgins, participated in a multinational commemoration along with the heads of state and governments from countries including the UK and France at the Thiepval monument to 'the missing' of the Somme. Three months earlier the 'Remembrance Wall' had been unveiled at Glasnevin Cemetery commemorating all those who died during the Easter Rising of 1916 including the British soldiers who had died trying to suppress it. In November 2016 the Tánaiste Frances Fitzgerald attended the

Remembrance Sunday ceremony at the Cenotaph in Belfast whilst the Taoiseach Enda Kenny made his fifth annual trip to lay a wreath at Enniskillen. This ceremony, rather than the usual choice of Belfast, was also where the NI First Minister, Arlene Foster, was attending that day. In choosing this venue they can be seen to be mobilising not only the sacred dead of the Great War but also the dead of the 1987 attack at the site. As has become myth with such usage the message we are presented with as natural is that they (all) died that we might live (together) in freedom.

The Poppy and the Lily on the Falls

In November 2010 I saw my first poppy on the Falls. Not everyone on the Shankill wore a poppy near to Remembrance Sunday but many did. Walking up and down the Falls Road on Remembrance weekend for a second year I had yet to see anyone wearing one. What I had seen was the mural urging the viewer to 'wear your Easter lily to remember Ireland's patriot dead'. If any of the locals were wearing them these small badges were less easily spotted than the poppy's splash of red.

In the centre of the Falls Road in the area labelled 'the Gaeltacht Quarter' (Irish-speaking Quarter) stands a large building which used to be a Presbyterian church. With the decline in its congregation in part due to demographic separation in Belfast it had ceased to function as a church in 1982. It has since been transformed into an Irish language cultural centre and renamed Cultúrlann McAdam Ó Fiaich named after RC Cardinal Tomás Ó Fiaich and Presbyterian Robert McAdam both of whom were renowned scholars of the Irish language. In 2010 it was having what would eventually be a large and impressive extension added. Builder's hoardings surrounded the place. This being Belfast every panel had been decorated (Figs.88-103). They were covered with every imaginable Celtic and 'Irish' signifier set against an 'Irish' landscape: Cú Chulainn with his hurl, Queen Medb with the Dun Cow and the great White Bull, St Patrick holding a shamrock, the swans of Lir, the fish of knowledge, a hedge school, famine victims of 'An Gort Mor' (the Great Hunger), a drumlin, Celtic cross, warrior's shield, uilleann pipes, a fiddle, whistle, bodhran and the other instruments of traditional Irish music, Irish dancers, Patrick Pearse and so on. Two elements instantly stood out – an Orange Order banner and, running along the bottom and intermingled with grass and lilies, poppies. This was the work of the 'Ambassadors for Peace' and had been unveiled at a ceremony featuring Sinn Féin's Tom Hartley. The sight of

poppies in such a setting was shocking. Once again this demonstrates the power of context, intertextuality and reception to the meaning production of any sign. Many visitors passing the site would not have noticed the poppies or at least not have seen them as significant. Placed in this company, in this location, however, they were, for me, hugely meaningful. It was one thing for a Republican mayor to lay a wreath of poppies downtown. It was another altogether to see poppies painted in the heart of the Republican Falls Road. Here was, for this viewer, clear evidence of the use of engagement with the discourse of Remembrance to facilitate a claim to credibility as a cross-community anti-sectarian venue and organisation.

Fig.88. Mise Éire (I am Ireland), Culturlann hoardings, Falls Road, Belfast, November 2010. © John Poulter

Fig.89. Mise Éire (I am Ireland) 2, Culturlann hoardings, Falls Road, Belfast, November 2010.
© John Poulter

Fig.90. 'Long, long ago…', Swans of Lir, dolmen, Culturlann hoardings, Falls Road, Belfast, November 2010. © John Poulter

Fig.91. St. Patrick, round tower, rock carvings and Celtic design, Culturlann hoardings, Falls Road, Belfast, November 2010. © John Poulter

Fig.92. The Fish of Knowledge, Culturlann hoardings, Falls Road, Belfast, November 2010. © John Poulter

Fig.93. Fiddle, banjo, whistle and bhodran, Culturlann hoardings, Falls Road, Belfast, November 2010. © John Poulter

Fig.94. Modern day Hedge School, poppies and lilies, Culturlann hoardings, Falls Road, Belfast, November 2010. © John Poulter

Fig.95. Robert McAdam, poppies and lilies, Culturlann hoardings, Falls Road, Belfast, November 2010. © John Poulter

Fig.96. Renovated Culturlann, cafe sign, local Gaelic writer with drink, poppies and lilies, Culturlann hoardings, Falls Road, Belfast, November 2010. © John Poulter

Fig.97. Patrick Pearse, Gaelic newspaper, Culturlann hoardings, Falls Road, Belfast, November 2010. © John Poulter

Fig.98. Gaelic books, Orange Order Banner, standing stones, Celtic design, poppies and lilies, Culturlann hoardings, Falls Road, Belfast, November 2010. © John Poulter

Fig.99. Orange Order banner, Cardinal Tomás Ó Fiaich, Celtic design, poppies and lilies, Culturlann hoardings, Falls Road, Belfast, November 2010. © John Poulter

Fig.100. Famine family in rags, Penal Laws (suppression of Catholicism and Gaelic language), Celtic design, poppies and lilies, , Culturlann hoardings, Falls Road, Belfast, November 2010. © John Poulter

Fig.101. Irish dancers, Penal Laws (suppression of Catholicism and Gaelic language), starving child, Celtic design, poppies and lilies, , Culturlann hoardings, Falls Road, Belfast, November 2010. © John Poulter

Fig.102. Cú Chulainn with hurl, Queen Medb with Great White Bull and Dun Cow (from story of the Táin), Celtic design, Culturlann hoardings, Falls Road, Belfast, November 2010. © John Poulter

Fig.103. Poppies and Lilies, Culturlann hoardings, Falls Road, Belfast, November 2010. © John Poulter

To produce such a text and place it in such a position was to make a discursive intervention across a range of discourses including those that shaped the meaning and myth of the Great War, the Falls Road, Republicanism and Irishness. Such an intervention would have consequences and some of these would be in the form of resistance, rejection and accusations of treachery.

Another text on the hoardings can be seen to work to ameliorate such responses with a visual construction of the collective memory of the 'Irish Republican Falls Road' that, for the knowledgeable, made its distinctiveness and thus group-legitimating power clear. The text concerned was a version of a large mural that stands on the Loyalist Newtownards Road in East Belfast. Both feature Cú Chulainn and the dock cranes but the other elements show a variance.

Where the original (Fig.104) features Stormont, seat of Unionist political power, this one (Fig.105) had the Dublin GPO, site of the declaration of the Irish republic. The original has 'War' running down the left and 'Peace' down the right with 'Peace cannot be kept by force. It can only be achieved by understanding' at the bottom. The 'copy' had the 'same'

only written in Irish. Whilst the original has buildings of significance to the Loyalist community, including one damaged in the Belfast Blitz in WWII, the copy had the Falls Library, with the Bobby Sands mural in the background, Conway Mill, home of the Republican Museum, and, perhaps most significantly, in place of the Round Tower (of the Island of Ireland Peace Park?) it had Divis Tower, scene of some of the worst violence involving the British Army at the height of the Troubles. Another significant difference is that the original contained several poppies whilst this version had a lily at each bottom corner. The whole construction of this text states the distinctiveness of the experience of the people of the Falls. It constructs and celebrates an Irish Republican collective memory of the locale (as Halbwachs (1991) argues, there are as many collective memories as there are collectives). In doing so it restates the unity of its people. The reproduction of a consistent and lengthy past also confers legitimacy on their group identity. The Easter Lilies in the corners, combined with the sacrificial motif of the Christ-like Cú Chulainn, introduces the powerful signs of patriotic death of the 'soldiers' of the group and restates the demand for constancy in service of 'the cause' of Ireland that such 'sacrifices' necessitate.

The 'copy' makes the point that the Republican community will 'Remember' but that what it will remember is going to be different to the collective memory of Loyalists. Read alongside this, the poppies and lilies in the grass are less encouraging. Such cautious 'two steps forward, one step back' interventions typify the highly nuanced approach of Sinn Féin towards cultural politics.

Fig.104. War and Peace mural, Newtownards Road, Belfast, November 2011. © John Poulter

Fig.105. Adaptation of Newtownards Road mural, Culturlann hoardings, Falls Road, Belfast, November 2010. © John Poulter

As a postscript to this, two years later I carried out my regular walkaround of the Falls in July and checked the murals of the International Wall. This is a wall at the bottom of the Falls and wrapping around onto Northumberland Avenue, which leads to the Shankill, less than 500 metres away. It is covered in murals. Many of them reproduce the collective memory and myth of Republicanism but several focus on struggles and events beyond Ireland such as the plight of the Palestinians, the Kurds, the historic struggle of the ANC in South Africa and the imperialistic military adventures of the USA. When visiting I check to see what changes to this varied presentation have been created. On this occasion I found a new mural (Fig.106) promoting the latest album by popular Irish folk musician Tommy Sands (no known family relationship to Bobby Sands MP, the IRA Hunger Striker) and his two children. Sands is known for being a peace activist as well as a singer. Reminiscent of the hoardings at Cúlturlann, the mural is set in an Irish landscape with much Celtic design and with poppies and lilies in profusion in the grass at the musicians' feet. The album is titled 'Arising from the Troubles'. This example supports Antonio Gramsci's (1971) observation that the 'arena of popular culture' is a key site for the struggle over hegemony. In the power struggle over control of the forces and legitimacy of Republicanism, and in the delicate negotiation of reconciliatory work Sinn Féin now see as vital to enable a united Ireland, popular culture has a powerful role to play.

Fig.106. Tommy Sands 'Arising from the Troubles' mural (detail), International Wall, Northumberland Street, Falls, Belfast, July 2013. ©John Poulter

Another part of this discursive construction is the Easter Lily mural on the corner of the Falls Road and Brookemount Avenue, or RPG [Rocket Propelled Grenade] Avenue as the unofficial sign would have it. During the period of my research this has been updated on occasions but always carries the same core message. In 2011 the latest version (Fig.107)

urged 'Honour Ireland's Dead. Wear an Easter Lily' with a large 'H 30 1981-2011'. This leaves no doubt as to who 'Ireland's dead' are – the 10 1981 Hunger Strikers whose 30th anniversary it was. The Sinn Fein logo in the corner also ensured that credit for the production of such a patriotic message accrued to the right Republicans. As a background it had a silhouetted outline of guard towers, walls and wire from the H Blocks of the Maze Prison or Long Kesh as it is also known. This iconography intertextually referenced and provided a riposte to the silhouetted no-man's-land, with its parapets and wire, common to WWI murals in Loyalist areas. It also features the lark, a symbolic signifier of Bobby Sands and the Hunger Strikers. Once again this intertextually links with the myths of the Great War.

Fig.107. 'Honour Ireland's Dead: Wear an Easter Lily' mural, Beechmount Avenue, Falls Road, Belfast, November 2011. © John Poulter

Fussell (2000) writes of the prominence and ubiquity of mentions of birdsong in narratives that construct our postmemory (Hirsch, 1992) of the landscape and experience of the Western Front in the Great War. This is why the *Birdsong* title of Sebastian Faulks (1994) novel dealing with the war does not strike those possessing this memory as obtuse but

rather as an obvious poetic and poignant choice from the lexicon of Great War memory. And the lark is particularly appropriate. Fussell writes:

> In addition to shepherds and sheep, pastoral requires birds and birdsong. One of the remarkable intersections between life and literature during the war occurred when it was found that Flanders and Picardy abounded in the two species long the property of symbolic literary pastoral – larks and nightingales. The one now became associated with stand-to at dawn, the other with stand-to at evening. (Sometimes it is really hard to shake off the conviction that this war has been written by someone.) p241

The most wonderful element of this quote is, of course, the writer's honest exposure, in the last sentence, of his experience of trying to make sense of the connections between the Great War and literature. It also, perhaps unintentionally, serves as an insight into and reminder of the productive role of the researcher and writer in constructing meaning and attributing connections and consequences in the course of textual analysis. We are, quite literally, making sense.

Two years later another new version of the Easter Lily mural had appeared. The words were the same but this was now illustrated with the Antrim Republican Memorial in Milltown cemetery. Easter Lilies are all around it. Michael Stone, the Loyalist who launched a grenade and pistol attack on an IRA funeral in Milltown in 1988, captured on film by the television crews covering the event, stated that his plan was to shoot Gerry Adams and Martin McGuinness at the Antrim memorial – 'their cenotaph' – in retaliation for the previous year's attack at Enniskillen (Stone, 2004: 118). 'Their cenotaph' now appeared alongside the lily on the Falls. As with the shifting focus in Loyalist murals the 'heroes' depicted alongside this appeal are those of the 1916 Rising and older rebellions rather than more recent Republican fighters (Fig.108).

Fig.108. New Easter Lily and County Antrim (Republican) Memorial, Beechmount Avenue, Falls Road, Belfast, July 2012. © John Poulter

By November 2016 this version was looking worn and in need of attention but new representations of the lily had appeared on several walls on the road. These featured a lily on a plaque commemorating the centenary of the Easter Rising (Fig.109). A new mural featuring a wide range of Republican iconography including the bombardment of the Dublin GPO in 1916, the pikes of the United Irishmen in their rebellion of 1798, and trumping any other possible claims to longevity of the struggle, Cú Chulainn on his 'cross', also had a bunch of the Easter Lilies prominently displayed (Figs.110-112). The poppy was nowhere to be seen.

Fig.109. New Easter Lily plaque, Falls Road, Belfast, November 2016. © John Poulter

Fig.110. Easter Lilies on new Easter Rising mural, Falls Road, Belfast, November 2016. © John Poulter

Fig.111. New Easter Rising mural, Falls Road, Belfast, November 2016. © John Poulter

Fig.112. Cú Chulainn on new Easter Rising mural, Falls Road, Belfast, November 2016. © John Poulter

Three years earlier, and after the appearance of the poppy being chaperoned by the lily on the hoardings of Cúlturlann and the International Wall, there appeared a very striking poppy image on the wall at the corner of Hugo Street and the Falls Road (Fig.113). Walking up to Milltown Cemetery I had seen a mural in the early stages of being painted. Returning later I was able to see the finished work. A poppy dripping blood and with a skull at its centre dominated the middle of the mural. For those needing more guidance text above labelled it: 'Symbol of British Imperialism around the world'. On either side of the poppy and intertextually referencing the arrangement of regimental 'battle honours' on British Army regimental flags were listed Palestine, Libya, Malvinas, Ireland, Iraq, Afghanistan. Beneath the poppy was the demand; 'Britain out of Ireland'. This and the text at the top were painted in such a way that, citing the generic conventions of countless horror film posters, it was to be read as having been written in blood.

Fig.113. Bleeding Poppy mural, Hugo Street, Falls Road, Belfast, November 2013. © John Poulter

The wall had developed, over the period of my research, into the home for the murals of the new left-wing Republican party 'Eirigi', launched in 2010. They were using this central signifier of Remembrance to demonstrate their anti-imperialist stance and their

determination to state this case despite the potential for the undermining of reconciliation moves between Sinn Fein and Loyalism/Unionism. It will have been no coincidence that the following day, November 11th, at a low key Armistice Day ceremony featuring no British military the Mayor, Sinn Fein's Mairtin O Muilleoir, was in attendance for the first time. This mural is a stark reminder of the strength of feeling amongst Republicans against the British Army and what is very much seen as its signifier – the poppy. Understanding this context lends additional meaning and significance to any engagement with Remembrance and also enables appreciation of the reasons for the caution with which they approach it.

By November 2016 the poppy mural has gone and been replaced by a less confrontational one in support of Palestinian prisoners. Opposite it is the wall that for many years held a mural decrying the treatment of the Hunger Strikers and reviling Margret Thatcher. This has now gone and been replaced by a mural celebrating the move from the 'bullet to the ballot'. A row of arms hold aloft a series of increasingly modern rifles. (Notice how a rifle is never merely 'held up' in such images: Fussell (2000: 175) is right to point out the extent to which a high language of military valour saturates our culture). This sequence of rifles is very similar to those used on the Glenwood mural on the Shankill and has the same purpose – the representation of continuity, legitimacy and continued determination in the face of apparent change. Such an argument is increasingly necessary for Sinn Fein to voice to its republican critics. The last arm holds up ballot papers with just the word 'Unity' and an agreeing tick on them (Fig.114).

Fig.114. 'From Bullet to Ballot: The Evolution of our Revolution' mural, Hugo Street, Falls Road, Belfast, November 2016. © John Poulter

The usefulness of 'chaperones'

The chaperoning of symbols, as with the entwined lilies and poppies, is one way of continuing to engage with projects aimed at reconciliation that mobilise the signifiers and challenge the myths of Remembrance whilst also attempting to ameliorate critical responses to what is seen by some as not only the demilitarisation but also capitulation of mainstream Republicanism. Chaperoning by neutral humans is another strategy. In 2012 I found a square green floral tribute featuring a shamrock, and also a small bouquet of dog daisies on the Cross of Sacrifice in Milltown Cemetery. Did this signify another Unionist 'visitor' or engagement with the monument by members of the nationalist community? (Fig.115)

Fig.115. Shamrock motif floral tribute with red and white flowers (not poppies), Great War memorial, Milltown Cemetery, Falls Road, Belfast, November 2012. © John Poulter

Heading down to the airmen's graves I arrived to see a group of smartly dressed men. In light of the previous wreath from Sandy Row I wondered if they were visiting from a Loyalist area but when I spoke to them I discovered that a completely new element had been added to the scene. They were all Polish residents of Belfast and they had come there to commemorate the Polish airmen because the day, 11th November, is the Polish National Independence Day. They come every year and place flowers, mainly red and white, and

Remembrance crosses at all of the graves in the line. They also place larger red and white floral tributes. Through the similarity of design and materials it is clear that the shamrock tribute had come from them. Since then I have always found such tributes at Milltown.

Returning there in November 2016 I once again find these signs of Remembrance but also a floral tribute that, despite maintaining the red and white theme, is of a different design more typical of these islands (Fig.116). I found a card within it that reads: 'In Remembrance from the Belfast National Graves'. This was significant. The National Graves organisation is the Irish equivalent of the Commonwealth War Graves Commission. They maintain the graves of those who have died 'for Irish Freedom'. To see them make such a gesture was intriguing. It is also significant that it is being made most obviously to the Polish dead. Yet the intermingling of the graves of the Polish and British dead, and the Poles decision to place flowers and candles on all the graves irrespective of the 'nationality' of its occupant, constructed a single tableau. This could be read as another step on the journey towards recognising the fact that many of those who died in a British uniform in both World Wars were doing so 'for Ireland'?

Fig.116. Red & White floral tributes at graves of Polish & British airmen, (Belfast National Graves tribute to right), Milltown Cemetery, Belfast, November 2016. © John Poulter

When I researched how this tribute came to be there I discovered that representatives of the Belfast National Graves organisation were present at a ceremony on the 11th with the Polish and also with representatives of 'Action for Conflict Transformation' (ACT) (Naszexpress – Belfast based Polish online magazine). ACT are an organisation set up in 2008 and registered as a charity in September 2015 'as a conflict transformation programme to facilitate the civilianisation of the Ulster Volunteer Force and the Red Hand Commando' (NI Charity Commission website 2015). So the Loyalists are engaged in work with Republicans to share activities around Remembrance and this is made possible through the use of the Polish, rather than British, dead as the stated focus and the use of the Polish living as the useful chaperones. This is another example of the careful choreography of change by the Republicans with the added intriguing ingredient of involvement of the Loyalists.

Searching for meaning in traces of Remembrance on the Falls

The most obvious fact about traces of Remembrance of the Great War on the Falls is that there are hardly any to be seen compared to the Shankill. In the cemeteries the poppy and Remembrance crosses appear sporadically. My research experiences tell me, however, that attributing this to any particular 'community' is unsafe.

The growing involvement of the Irish government in Remembrance ceremonies at the Cenotaph is aimed at breaking down divisions and reassuring Unionists of the inclusiveness of the Republic. The response to this demonstrated by some Unionists and Loyalists on their wreaths – attacks on those fighting for a united Ireland – shows that such an argument will face an uphill struggle in some quarters. The movement towards engagement with Remembrance in the Republic has also drawn criticism from those, like Hanley (2013, 2014), who see it as a drift towards not just commemoration but uncritical celebration. Some, such as the 'Shot at Dawn' campaign and Martin Lynch with his play *Holding Hands at Paschendale* (2006) on the same theme, have taken the opportunity of a renewed focus on the Great War to ask challenging questions about the treatment of the common soldier in the war. Eamonn McCann, the well-known writer, political activist and, from May 2016, MLA for left-wing party People Before Profit, when asked to contribute to the publication *Remembrance* (Lucy and McClure, 1997) used the opportunity to argue that we should definitely remember the deaths of all those young men but rather than

remembering them with pride we should 'remember with rage' against those who sent them to their deaths. Hanley takes this phrase as the title of his 2014 work.

The involvement of Sinn Fein with Remembrance has enabled some barriers to be broken down and mutual respect to be shown across what was once a lethal political divide (McCaffrey, 2003) but it has also drawn some negative responses from other Republicans. The Eirigi poppy mural, for instance, condemns all engagement with commemoration of the British Army. But Sinn Fein have been careful to limit and finesse their involvement with Remembrance. They pointedly don't touch the poppy, avoid attendance at ceremonies where the British Army has a key role and use their engagement with this 'memory' to question, like McCann, the myths of the Great War. One of the key arguments they challenge is that which argues that the Rising was a foolish political act as it was doomed to failure and only led to the rendering pointless the deaths of so many Irishmen who had enlisted to prove Ireland's loyalty and subsequently died on the beaches of Gallipoli and in the fields of Flanders. They argue that if their recent visits to the battlefields have taught them anything it is that Pearse and his comrades were absolutely right to act as they did in 1916. In the short term the backlash against the Rising led to a hardening of opposition to Britain in Ireland and growing support for the campaign opposing the extension of conscription to the island. In the long term it was essential to break away from Britain in order to save the young men of future generations from being used as cannon-fodder in Britain's ongoing imperial violence (Orr, 2008: 300). This demonstrates the indeterminate meaning of these battlefield landscapes which Switzer (2013: 216) describes as palimpsests. The other signifiers of Remembrance are equally polysemic as the exploration of the meaning of the poppy in the previous chapter demonstrated.

Careful Republican engagement with these signifiers has enabled them to further their political project whilst still maintaining their anti-imperialist and republican credentials. More generally, the engagement of the government of the Republic and the leaders of Republicanism with the Great War has led to it becoming seen as an acceptable part of the collective memory of the nationalist population. This has encouraged communication, collaboration and respect across community divides and also raised awareness on both sides of the crude political divide of the complexity of history, memory and thus identity. This is an essential step in any project to challenge divisions based in entrenched conceptualisations of identity, history and destiny.

Chapter 9   The anti-war memorial the Island of Ireland Peace Park

Introduction

This chapter explores how the Island of Ireland Peace Park, opened in 1998 in Belgium, intervenes in the discursive construction of national identity using the 'memory' of the First World War. Analysing memory as a discourse it examines how the texts within the Park and their use in practices produce meanings which challenge the hierarchical binary of 'Irish/British', itself a product, in part, of previous memory work involving the war, and thus present the possibility of reimagined forms of subjectivity and reconceived senses of national identity. It goes on to argue that the Park's design as an unheroic anti-war memorial also intertextually challenges identities dependent on engagement in physical conflict on the island. In both ways the Park works as part of the 'Northern Ireland Peace Process' and can be read not only as a monument to the dead of the First World War but also as a 'Troubles' memorial. The Park is obviously not in Belfast, and this, as shall be explained below, is crucial to its intended function. Because of the way in which it is introduced into the lives and minds of people from the city, however, it plays an integral part in the reconstruction of the discourse of Remembrance in Northern Ireland and therefore justifies closer study within this research.

The Island of Ireland Peace Park, at Messines in Belgium, is an example of a monument whose design and use is explicitly aimed at mobilising the memory it constructs of the past in order to intervene in the political discourses of the present. In this chapter I will describe how it came into being, how its construction was designed to address the 'forgotten' memory of Irish involvement in the Great War and how 'memories' of that war were, and continue to be, used in the construction of 'Irish' and 'British' national identity on the island of Ireland. I will also explain how this monument has been used to work towards peace in Northern Ireland. This will involve an analysis of how the various texts in the park, and the practices they are used in, work to re-shape the collective memory (Halbwachs, 1992), and thus the discourse, of both the Great War and also violent conflict more generally. It is this latter function of the Park that enables it to be understood as both an 'anti-war memorial' as well as a memorial to all the dead of the Northern Irish 'Troubles'[1].

Collective memory can most usefully be understood using Foucault's (1972) conceptualisation of a discursive construction. Such a discourse is the outcome of an

accumulation of texts and practices produced, distributed, maintained and policed by institutions within society. As such it is subject to relations of power within society and these power relations work to establish what is generally perceived as the truth within particular domains of knowledge. The chapter will, therefore, examine not only the memorial as a text and its use in practices but also the range of institutions involved in its design and construction as a textual materialisation of memory and its subsequent use in practices of 'remembering'.

The Peace Park intervenes in the discourses of both 'Ireland' and 'the Great War' as well as a range of related discourses – Unionism, Nationalism, Britishness, Irishness and martial glory. In doing so it is aimed at shaping these discourses in such a way as to present the possibility of reimagined forms of subjectivity – experienced as rediscovered Irish and British identities, with a changed perception of the connection between the two. It also asks questions, although more problematically, of identities dependent on engagement in physical conflict. In all of these ways, and with a specific focus on the last, this memorial intervenes in the Northern Ireland 'Peace Process'.

Approaching the memorial as a stage upon which meanings, and particularly meanings related to the nation, are constructed and displayed, is informed by Pierre Nora's (1996b) concept of the *lieu de mémoire*, variously translated as realm or site of memory. The fluidity of such meanings was a crucial element of his concept. The Derridean perspective on meaning that this awareness relates to certainly informs my approach to making sense of this memorial and also cautions me to disclaim any universality to the interpretations I will provide in this reading. It is based in a poststructuralist, anti-essentialist perspective which seeks to identify and explore the ways in which the fluidity of meaning, produced intertextually, is temporarily fixed, made myth, using Barthes' (1972) term, depoliticised and naturalised before subsequently being re-politicised, denaturalised, de-mythologised and reshaped through discursive interventions. In exploring these changes I will be helped by Alieda Assman's conceptualisation of active and passive memory, the organisation of the two into a canon and archive respectively and the role in this process of different types of 'forgetting'.

In exploring the significance of war memorials and commemorative practices such as Remembrance of the First World War I am working with the insights of several writers. Jay Winter (1995) focused on memorialisation of this conflict and argued that the materialisation of the dead in the memorial enabled their separation from the living and

thus facilitated the process of mourning by allowing forgetting. With the passage of a century, and bearing in mind the 'forgotten' role of many being commemorated there, I would argue that it is reconnection rather than separation that is now taking place at the Peace Park. Yet its potential role in regard to the more recent Troubles might well be partly understood using Winter's theory. Also useful is his (2010) observation that all such sites of memory materialise a moral message. Mosse (1990) would argue that this moral message typically uses the dominant construction of the soldier's death as 'self-sacrifice' as part of what Bushaway (1992) argues was the fixing of the meaning of the war through the language of Remembrance. This closed down political argument about the lessons that should be learnt from the war and supported the political status quo. One of the techniques used was a deliberate reticence (King, 1999) in both memorial design and ceremonial content – most centrally the Silence – which enabled a plurality of interpretations by those unified through the activity of the ritual. For some writers (e.g. MacDonald, 2006 and Becksteads et al, 2011) this lack of words was replaced by the affective agency of the very materials of the memorials. The Peace Park certainly makes use, most obviously in its central tower and its granite slabs, of the scale and texture of its materials. One must be careful, however, when attributing affective agency to materials, not to underplay the role discourse plays in promoting particular 'sensual' reactions to the world around us and also not to overstate the greater precision of meanings of words compared to objects.

The function of war memorials in the construction and maintenance of the nation will be dealt with when looking at the case of Ireland below. Their role in reconciliation is equally complex and my exploration of the Peace Park's potential for this is informed not only by those writers mentioned above but also, in particular, Clark (2013), Govier (2009), and Prost (1997). Clark, studying the Croatian town of Vukovar, argued that the proliferation of war memorials and commemorations in the town was a serious impediment to reconciliation. It kept memories raw, suppressed divergent narratives and thus worked to sustain a separation of Serb and Croat. Partisan memorials in Northern Ireland to the dead of the Troubles could be seen to similarly reproduce oppositional identities and thus have the same negative impact on attempts at reconciliation. The positioning of this memorial in Belgium, however, can be understood, after Prost (1997), as producing meanings untainted by the deep associations of demarcated space. Its ostensible focus on another conflict is also, clearly, crucial. The war being remembered has greater potential for the establishing of 'shared truths', shared memorials and the practice of shared ceremonies. The shared

memorial might not be to the Troubles but it enables the establishment of shared truths about shared suffering in the First World War that are then intertextually implicitly mobilised to encourage the acknowledgement of shared suffering in the Troubles and this includes the 'aversive acknowledgement' which Govier (2009) argues is essential for any possible reconciliation.

It is the power of this allusive, intertextual exploitation and shaping of memory in the cause of civic, national and international reconciliation that is, perhaps, the key lesson to be learnt from examining the example of the Island of Ireland Peace Park. The choice of location undermines the certainties of locally sustained discourses of identity and enables 'fraternisation' and reflection. The choice of focus shifts time and redoubles the potential for the questioning of received truths. Lastly, the choice of 'voices' and the manner of their presentation challenges the myth of martial glory and turns this into an 'anti-war memorial'. I shall now explain how this has been achieved.

Memory, nation and the Great War in Ireland: The reason for the project

The different histories of Remembrance of the Great War in the two polities that came to be constructed on the island of Ireland after the conflict can be understood as illustrating some of the ways in which the past is utilised in the project of nation-building. In the 'Irish Free State', Irish, and particularly Irish nationalist, service in the British Army during the Great War did not fit in to the national story being constructed. Remembrance of the war was a widespread but politically contentious practice. Over time it became marginalised, retreated into the semi-private spaces of the Southern Protestants and Unionists, and gradually fell out of the collective memory of the nation (Leonard, 1996; Burke, 2004; Rigney, 2008). By contrast, the Unionists of 'Northern Ireland' centralised commemoration of the 'sacrifices' they had made out of loyalty to the Crown, particularly at the Somme (see e.g. Loughlin, 2002). For the dominant groups within each polity the categories of 'Irish Nationalist' and 'British Soldier' were constructed as binary opposites and, as Derrida (1976) pointed out, such organising binary oppositions are always designed to be hierarchical and thus not only separate out, and therefore identify, a self and an Other, but also establish the relative value of both. Anderson (1983) argued that an essential element in the construction of the 'imagined community' of the nation and national identity is the perception of 'ourselves' sharing experiences. The role of memory in this imaginative work

could be seen as the construction of an 'imagined persisting community' by extending such communion into a past that lends a permanence and thus authenticity to identity differences and claims of sovereignty. Thus did the differing values and meanings of Remembrance help to imaginatively solidify the new border on the island of Ireland.

The different memories of the Great War constructed on the island through the range of texts and practices described and analysed in previous chapters fed into discourses of national identity and, within Northern Ireland, were part of the discourses of division which the 'Peace Process' had to attempt to break down.

It is within the context of such divergent 'memories' and political uses of the Great War that the creation of the Peace Park needs to be understood. Its genesis in 1996 saw a party of 50 set off from Ireland for a tour of the battlefields, cemeteries and memorials in France and Belgium. This 'fact-finding trip' was the idea of Paddy Harte, up until a few months before a long-standing Fine Gael TD (member of parliament) representing Donegal in the Republic of Ireland, who had recently made his first visit to these sites. Among those he took with him was someone he knew from 'cross-community' work in the North – Glen Barr from Derry/Londonderry, once a union official, a Loyalist paramilitary leader with the Ulster Defence Association (UDA) and subsequently a community worker running training schemes for young people. They went to various sites on the Somme; experienced the unsettling blend of serene calm and buried horror of the war cemeteries and the mind-defeating scale of the list of names of the missing carved into the enormous Thiepval monument. It was, according to Barr, a very emotional day. (Information on this tour is taken from interviews by the author with Glen Barr and Tom Burke (Royal Dublin Fusiliers Association) and also from Harte (2010)).

Close to the Theipval monument they visited the impressive Ulster Tower erected in commemoration of the losses of the 36th (Ulster) Division during the Battle of the Somme. This division mainly comprised the Ulster Volunteer Force (UVF), the militia raised in the north-east of the island in 1913 to resist the 'imposition' of Home Rule. Although it did contain some Catholics (see Grayson's (2009) intervention in this history) the vast majority of the 36th's members were drawn from the ranks of Protestant Unionism of all classes with the bulk of the 'men' being working class Loyalists. Among them had been Barr's father and nine of his uncles on both his father and mother's sides of the family. The Division had been part of the disastrous attack on the first day of the battle on 1st July

1916 when they had suffered over 5000 casualties. In Northern Ireland this event was to take on a central role in the Unionist collective memory of the war.

After this stop the tour group moved on to the nearby village of Guillemont. In September of 1916, here and at the neighbouring village of Ginchy, it had been the tragic turn of the 16th (Irish) Division. The Division had similar origins to the 36th, having been formed largely from the Irish Volunteers raised to oppose the UVF and *ensure* the establishment of Home Rule. At the outbreak of the war their nationalist leaders urged them to enlist in the British Army to demonstrate Ireland's loyalty to the Crown in the hope that this would ensure a speedy and satisfactory implementation of Home Rule when the war ended. Tens of thousands joined the British forces and particularly the 16th (Irish) Division. At the Somme they were to suffer a similar fate to that of their erstwhile opponents. In a few days they suffered over 4000 casualties. Their story was not, however, to loom large in the publically curated 'collective memory' of their descendants. There is a memorial – a granite Celtic cross outside a disused church – but at the time of this visit the railings around it were rusted and the site uncared for. The party commented, with a mixture of sorrow, anger and guilt, at the discrepancy between the two main memorials to the Irish on the Somme. Harte and Barr resolved to do something about it. Within two years the 'Island of Ireland Peace Park' was opened.

Their first step was to initiate discussions aimed at producing what they felt would be both a more fitting monument and also a tool for peace-making (Harte, 2010; also interview with Barr by author). Initially the idea was to place some sort of new memorial at Guillemont in memory of the 16th Division but then, with the hoped-for reconciliatory function in mind, a more symbolically significant site was selected. In June 1917 the 16th and 36th Divisions had found themselves positioned next to each other in the British trenches. In the battle of Messines Ridge these two groups, largely made up of the opposing 'Pro-' and 'Anti-' Home Rule militias, fought alongside rather than against each other. Barr and Harte launched their organisation – 'A Journey of Reconciliation' – and set about raising funds to build a memorial at the site which would use its potential for the construction of a *shared* history.

They quickly found they were pushing at an open door. A range of influential institutions agreed to support the project. Some, including both the Irish Republic and UK governments, provided money. The financial support of the Fianna Fail government (historically seen as the more 'Republican' of the two main parties) was seen by Harte as

encouraging similar support from a wide range of businesses on the island (2010: 78). Others provided logistical assistance, expertise and materials. A group of religious ministers that could be seen to represent both nationalist and unionist 'communities' agreed to act as the trustees. Barr brought his trainees, both Catholic and Protestant, over from Derry to help with the work on the site. The Park was opened by the heads of state, President Mary McAleese, Queen Elizabeth II, and their chaperone, the King of Belgium, on Armistice Day 11th November 1998 (Harte, 2010: 88). The presence of the Irish and British heads of state confirmed the patronage of these two hugely influential institutions on the island.

This first joint public appearance by the two came only a few months after the signing of the Good Friday (Belfast) Agreement and at a time when agreement between the parties in Northern Ireland was far from settled, killings were continuing and forensic experts were still working their way through the wreckage of the Omagh bombing – responsible for the greatest loss of life in one incident in the entire thirty years of the Troubles. This symbolic commemoration of a shared memory by the two marked a new stage in the construction of a discourse of reconciliation. At this meeting McAleese expressed her hope that the Queen would soon be able to visit the Republic, which would be the first such visit by a UK head of state since the 1916 uprising (Harte, 2010: 93). It took a further 13 years before such a visit took place and when it did memory and war memorials played a very prominent role in the carefully choreographed rituals of reconciliation.

The Island of Ireland Peace Park as text

The signifier dominating the Park is a 34 metre high round tower of the style that featured in religious sites across Ireland between the 9th and 12th century (Fig.117). No other structure at the heart of the site could so unequivocally have signified that this was an 'Irish' space. In the centre of the small round room at its base an inverse stone relief of the island of Ireland bears no marked borders (Fig.118).

Fig.117. Approach to Round Tower, Island of Ireland Peace Park, Messines, Belgium, August 2014. © John Poulter

Fig.118. Inverse relief of island of Ireland at base of Round Tower, Island of Ireland Peace Park, Messines, Belgium, August 2014. © John Poulter

This signification of Ireland as a whole, rather than divided, entity is also the clear aim of many of the other symbols in the park. Four stones bear the names of the 'four green fields' of the island: the provinces of Munster, Leinster, Ulster and Connaught. Ulster here not the last – an afterthought – but with others at each shoulder. Another stone is filled

with the names of all thirty two counties. There are no gaps nor any punctuation (Fig.119). They run into one another and tumble across the ends and beginnings of lines without any heed of individual names: with no boundaries, no borders.
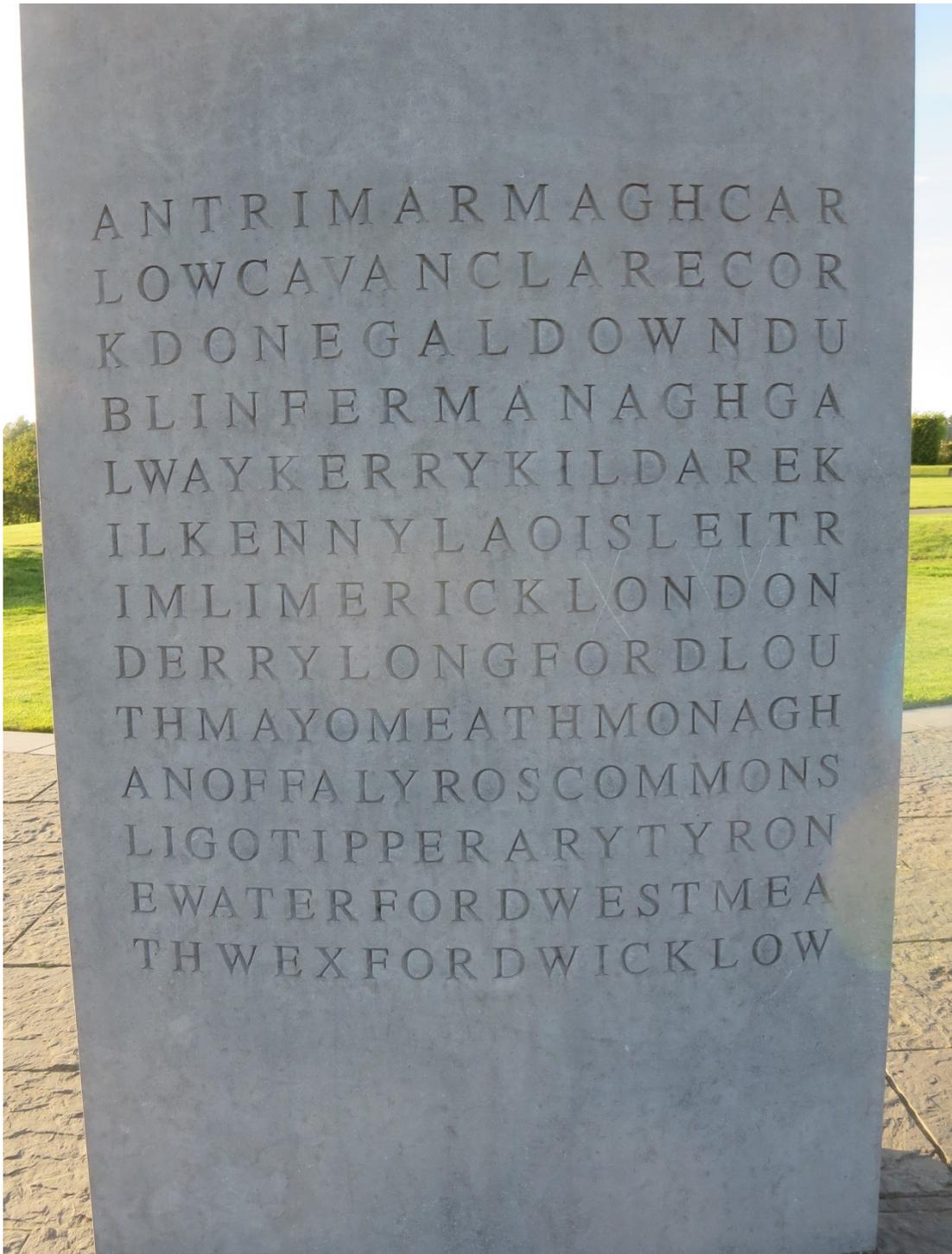
Fig.119. Counties of the island of Ireland, Island of Ireland Peace Park, Messines, Belgium, August 2014. © John Poulter

These texts work metonymically and metaphorically to signify the indivisibility of the island and, in the context of the site, extend the logic of this indivisibility to its population. Another three stones emphasise the island-wide impact of the Great War by carrying the grim statistics of casualties suffered not only by the famous UVF-filled 36th (Ulster) division (32,186) but also by the 16th (Irish) (28,398) and 10th (Irish) (9,363). This inclusivity is also signified and facilitated by the use of both Irish and English in the first inscriptions one encounters in the park. At the entrance the gateposts bear plaques naming it as both 'Páirc síochana d'oileán na hEireánn' and the 'Island of Ireland Peace Park'. The presence of the highly politicised language of Irish cultural nationalism at the site is a vivid signifier of its difference from all the Commonwealth War Graves Commission (CWGC) 'British' cemeteries in the surrounding countryside and also from the majority of the numerous war memorials back home on the island of Ireland. Further information is placed just inside the gateway in both languages as well as Flemish and French. This reminds us that the site is, significantly, placed in territory where two language communities co-exist within the one state (at the time of writing…).

The rest of the texts in the park work to both construct a discourse of shared suffering and also a critique of the reverence with which the war is remembered by many within the Unionist and British population. In the process, and particularly because of links established intertextually on the streets of Northern Ireland between the person of the Great War soldier and the Loyalist paramilitary (as described in chapter 7), and more generally all paramilitaries and all soldiers, the texts also work to critique *all* war and *all* violence.

 As the tower is approached, three groups of three horizontal inscribed 'gravestones' present the words of witnesses to the events of the war (Fig.117). Down the road at the CWGC 'British Cemetery' the standard inscription on the 'Stone of Remembrance' is the line Rudyard Kipling, whose only son died in the Irish Guards during the war, chose for the purpose from the Bible – 'Their Name Liveth for Evermore' – and the headstones provide us with little more than these names and in some cases not even that. 'A soldier of the Great War: known unto God' is the most that can be offered for many. In the Peace Park the 'gravestones' provide much more vivid material to shape the discourse of the war: to shape the 'memory' of the war. Even their construction works toward this end. In the CWGC cemetery the white Portland stone of the memorials and headstones sitting within the neatly trimmed greenery signifies anything but the carnage and decay of the battlefield. In the Peace Park the 'gravestones' and other memorials are constructed from

blocks of grey granite. The cutting of the stone reveals a naturally pock-marked surface. On the grey day I first visited they seemed to signify death and decay.

The 'witness statements' inscribed upon them and taken from the letters, diaries, memoirs and poems of soldiers, can be argued to fall into three categories:, 'descriptive', 'romantic' and 'bitter'. Each set of three contains one from each category. The 'descriptive' stones construct the war from detailed moments. Terence Poulter reports the soldiers' joy at the moment of the Armistice. J.F.B. O'Sullivan brings to life the chaotic terror of a 'hissing and shrieking pandemonium' as a 'cyclone of bursting shells enveloped us'. Whilst Chaplain Francis Gleeson gauntly describes the aftermath of such an attack:

> Spent all night trying to console, aid and remove the wounded. It was ghastly to see them lying there in the cold, cheerless outhouses, on bare stretchers, with no blankets to cover their freezing limbs.

All three, in the course of their descriptions, construct the common soldier as terrified, neglected and ultimately delighted to see the end of the war.

The quote from *Soliloquy* by poet Francis Ledwidge proclaims his belief that he was blessed to be part of the war but he is alone here in expressing such a sentiment. As an active, and republican leaning, nationalist during his life and with his best known poem – *Lament for Thomas MacDonagh* – mourning the executed Easter rebel and fellow poet, this soldier poet of the British Army perfectly illustrates the complexity of Irish engagement with the Great War.

Patrick MacGill's verse, taken from *A Lament*, is not in the same warrior-poet vein. Twice it attempts to strike a mawkishly sentimental note but the latter half of each sentence has a bleaker and more despairing edge. It concludes – 'They'll call me coward if I return, but hero if I fall'.

Tom Kettle, like Ledwidge, anticipated his approaching death and wrote the verse *To my daughter, Betty, the gift of God* cited here, only a few days before being killed (Fig.120). In it he retains a belief in a principled death but makes it clear that he died 'not for flag, nor King, nor Emperor'. What he believes he did die for one assumes is the idea of Irish nationhood and freedom but one can only deduce this because of familiarity with this MP's Irish Nationalist politics. His description of his cause as 'a dream born in a herdsman's shed and the secret scripture of the poor' is otherwise enigmatic. What is not in doubt is the self-criticism the verse contains for him, and his countrymen, 'we fools, now with the foolish dead', finding themselves dying in the uniform of the King a few weeks after the

'Easter Rising' in Dublin had rendered futile their efforts to demonstrate Ireland's loyalty to the Crown.
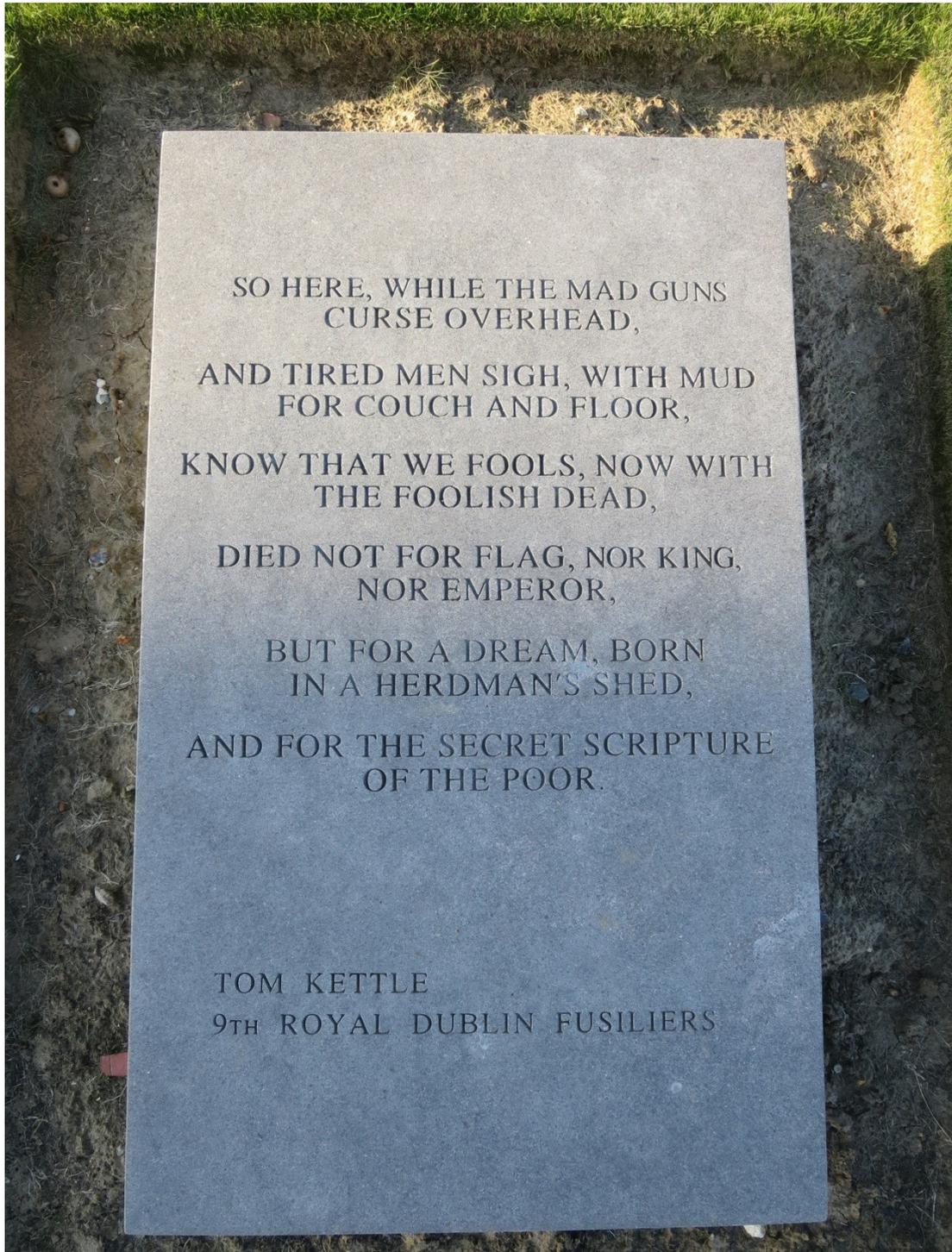
Fig.120. 'Witness Statement' from Tom Kettle, Island of Ireland Peace Park, Messines, Belgium, August 2014. © John Poulter

Such a critical stance leads us on to my final category of the 'bitter' statements. These include the lean poetry of the official war artist William Orpen (Fig.121). Whilst many of his

works were of gallant officers and sage generals he also drew and painted the destruction and misery of the trenches. Here he captures in words this experience of impersonal, sudden, mechanised death in a wasted landscape:

> I mean / the simple soldier man, / who, when the / Great War first began, / just died, stone dead / from lumps of lead, / in mire. (taken from the poem *Myself, Hate and Love*)
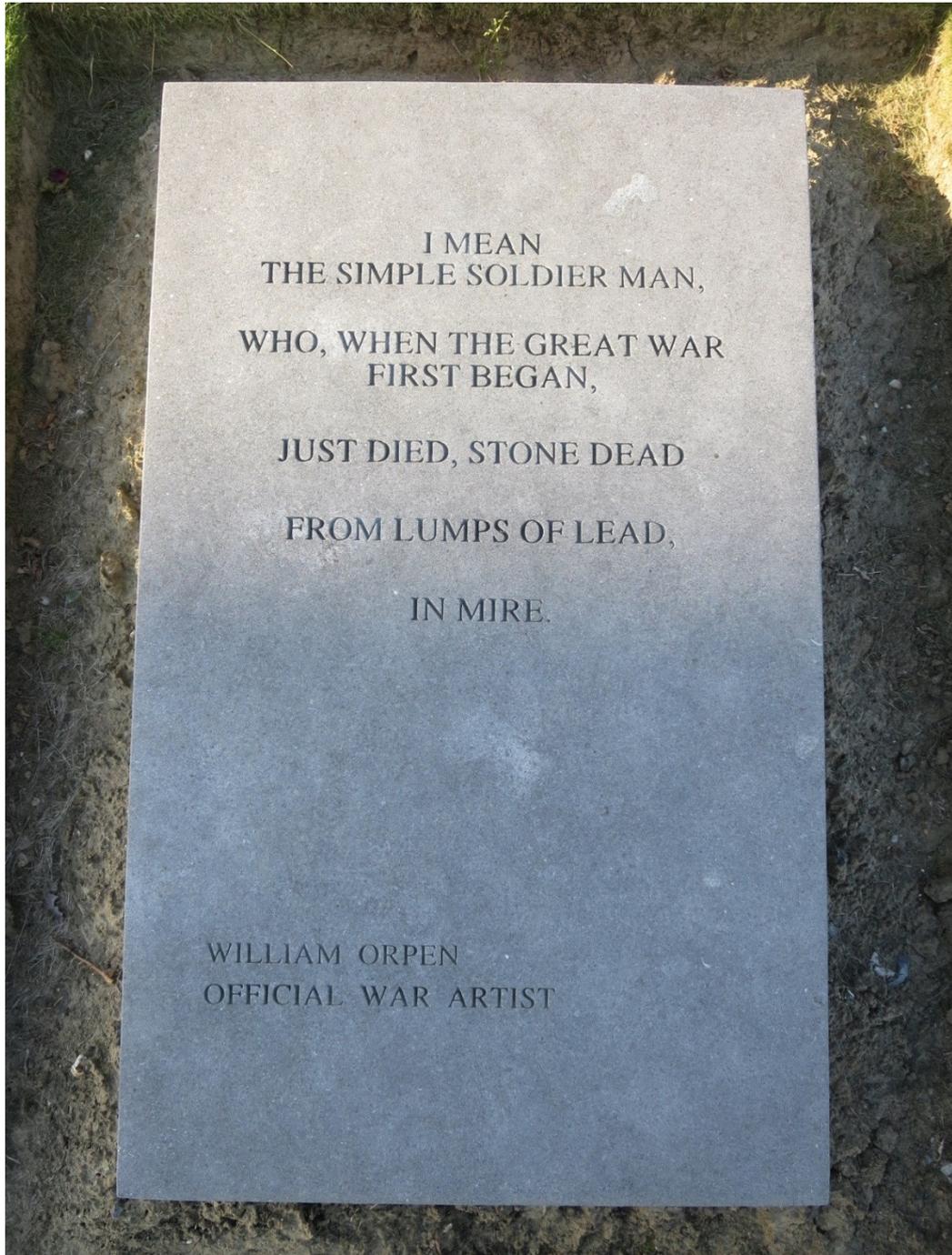
Fig.121. 'Witness Statement' from William Orpen, Island of Ireland Peace Park, Messines, Belgium, August 2014. © John Poulter

Captain Charles Miller (Fig.122) also focuses on the mud that gave Ypres, and particularly the Battle of Passchendaele, an additional horror:

> As it was the Ypres battlefield just represented one gigantic slough of despond into which floundered battalions, brigades and divisions of infantry without end, to be shot to pieces or drowned, until at last and with immeasurable slaughter we had gained a few miles of liquid mud.
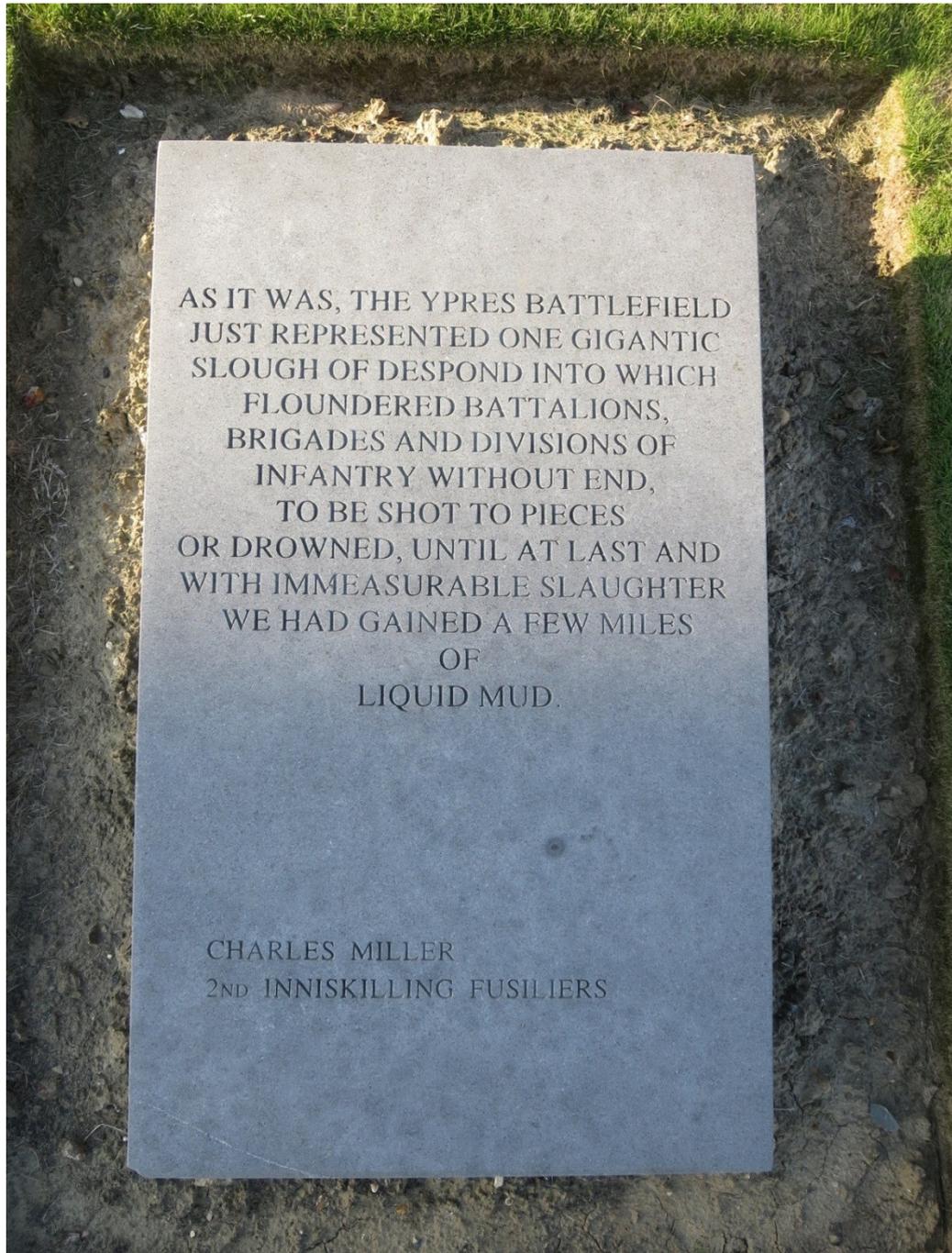
Fig.122. 'Witness Statement' from Captain Charles Miller, Island of Ireland Peace Park, Messines, Belgium, August 2014. © John Poulter

This railing against the futility of the slaughter is, thanks to the British 'War Poets', and particularly Owen and Sassoon, a familiar, if contested, part of the 'British' 'memory' of the war but rarely, if ever, is it represented so explicitly and permanently, *carved in stone*, in official memorials to the conflict. It is this radical use of the powerful and permanent materiality of the masonry of memory that is perhaps the most striking aspect of the Park for all visitors. The monumental power of such texts is harnessed for a contrary and subversive purpose. The final 'gravestone' on the approach to the tower (Fig.123) provides the most striking example of this as it departs even more dramatically from the conventional construction of stories of gallant and willing sacrifice in a noble cause usually present at war memorials. Here the words taken from the memoir of Private David Starrett, originally of the UVF and then batman to Brigadier General Crozier, stand as a stark accusation of the exploitation and destruction of the poor soldier in the interests of the greedy rich.

> So the curtain fell over that tortured country of unmarked graves and unburied fragments of men. Murder and massacre: the innocent slaughtered for the guilty. The poor man for the sake of the greed of the already rich: the man of no authority made the victim of the man who had gathered importance and wished to keep it.
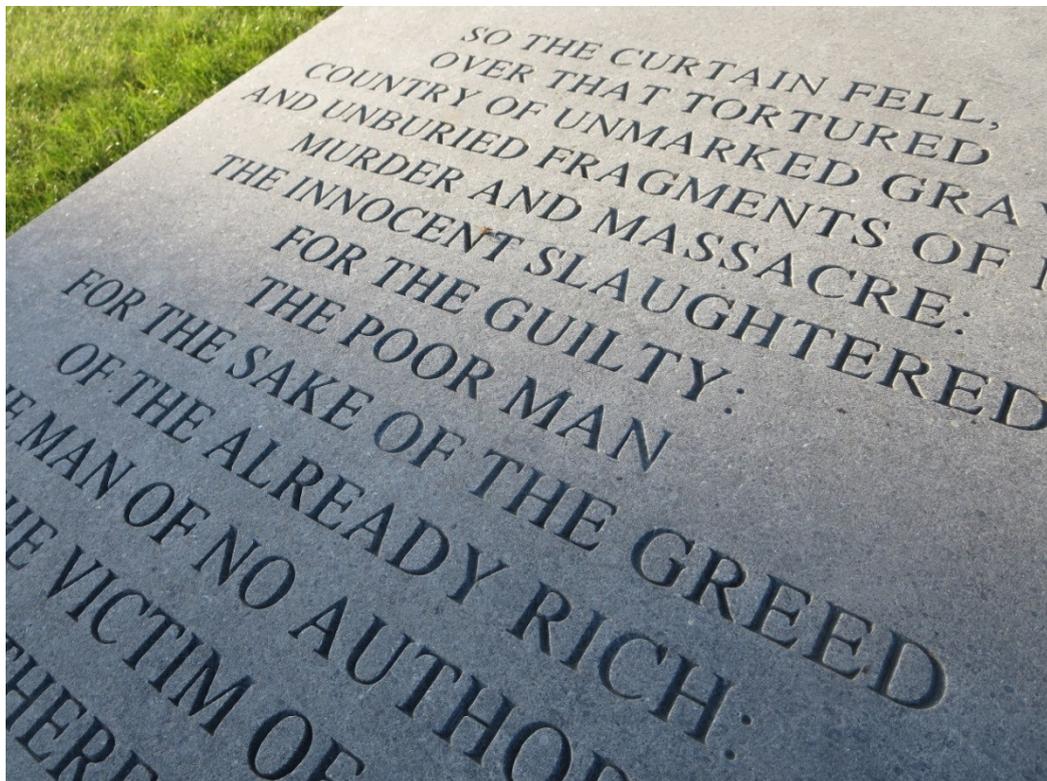

Fig.123. 'Witness Statement' from David Starrett (detail), Island of Ireland Peace Park, Messines, Belgium, August 2014. © John Poulter

There are other First World War memorials that make such statements about the guilt of the rich in the war – Eric Gill's relief depiction of Jesus driving the money-changers from the temple, at the University of Leeds, is one example – but they are rare. This can be understood not only in terms of relations of power but also as a consequence of the circumstances of general loss in which the vast majority of the monuments were constructed. Only a few years after the war the numbers of still grieving bereaved encouraged those designing such memorials not to materialise in stone the doubts some had about the price 'the nation' had paid for victory. They had not, could not, have died in vain. 'The Glorious Dead' was a sentiment carved into the Cenotaph in London and echoed, literally or figuratively, on monuments throughout the British Empire and beyond. But the shaping of the memorial discourse in this way was also a result of the play of power. Those who were most likely to see little gain for their losses, the workless poor, were also those least able to influence the design and wording of memorials (see for example Mark Connelly's (2002) detailing of the case of the City of London). To question the point of the war was to question the wisdom, morality and authority of those who had overseen and sanctioned it. Sanctifying the dead whilst also glorifying the war thus served the purposes of both offering some comfort to the bereaved and also maintaining the status quo. Thus the discursive practice of politics has memory at its heart. Oppositional voices attempting to present *their* version of this past face the daunting task of unsettling what quickly becomes 'myth' in Barthes' (1972) usage – the depoliticised 'truth' about the past.

In the case of the Peace Park, by deliberately setting out to create a memorial that would be acceptable to all parties on the island the planners had to include perspectives not normally allowed a voice in such designs. In particular this meant including views of the war that would be typical of both Republicans and internationalist socialists – who didn't just privately doubt but publically rejected the 'myth' of the war as either necessary or glorious. Including such previously excluded voices leads to the denaturalising and re-politicising of such established meanings and provides the opportunity for the potential reshaping of the discourses involved – the war, nationalism, loyalty, sacrifice, duty, etc. Thus the memorial intervenes in these discourses and attempts to shape the memory of the war to show its brutality, its horror and its waste.

The challenging of the discourse of martial glory is clearly one of the key aims of the memorial as it works to change the conflict in Northern Ireland. A plaque inscribed with a 'Peace Pledge' is affixed to another stone (Fig.124).
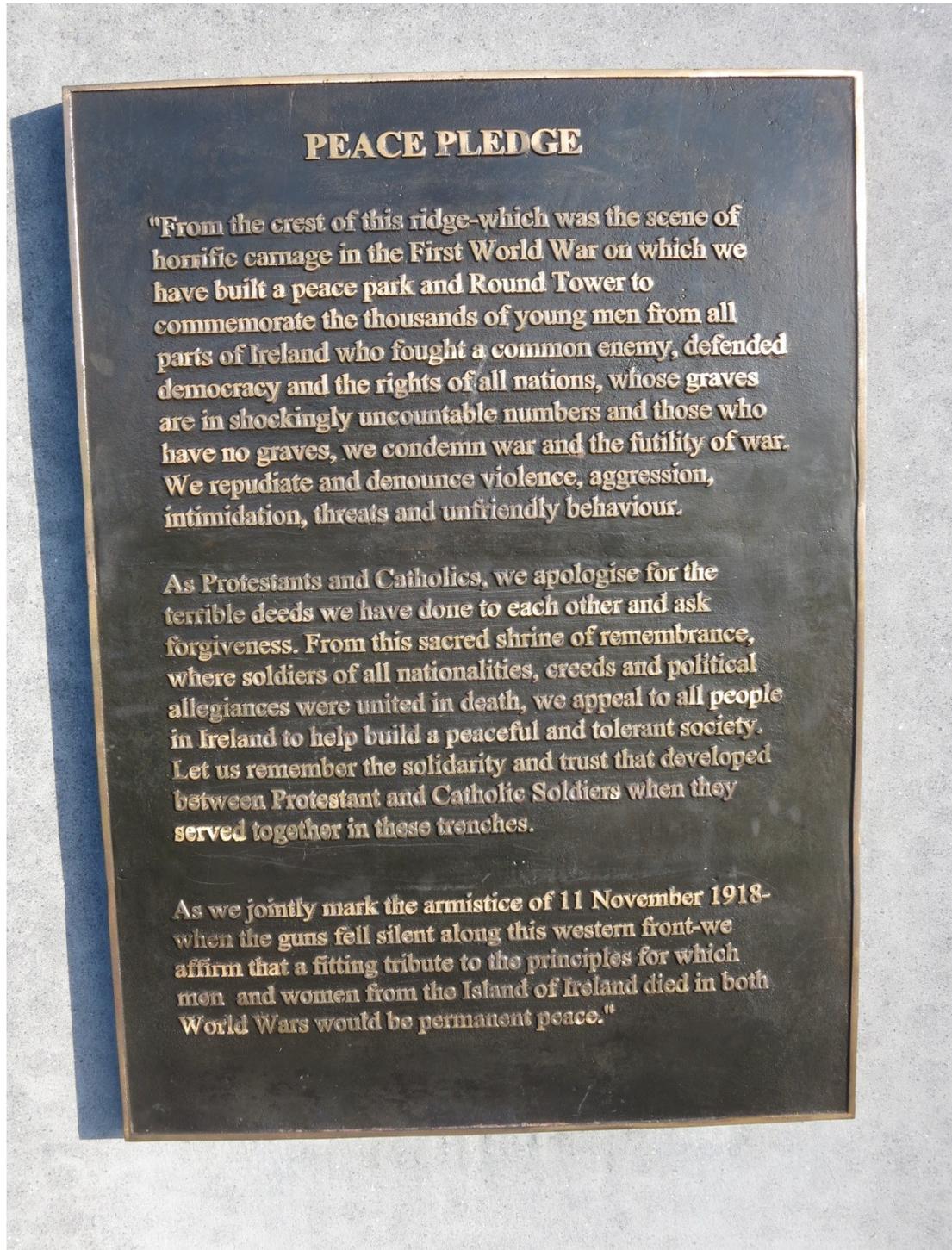
Fig.124. 'Peace Pledge', Island of Ireland Peace Park, Messines, Belgium, August 2014. © John Poulter

 The writers of the pledge, having described the 'carnage' that occurred at this spot in the past, 'condemn war, and the futility of war'. This then leads them on to 'repudiate and renounce violence'. We leave behind the fields of Flanders as it continues: 'As Protestants and Catholics, we apologise for the terrible deeds we have done to each other and ask forgiveness.' It then calls upon the fetishized power of the memorial, the deaths of those it commemorates, and the 'memory' of war as a whole, to *require* adherence to the pledge because of the *origin* of the appeal: '*From this sacred shrine of remembrance* where soldiers of all nationalities, creeds and political allegiances were united in death we appeal to all people in Ireland to help build a peaceful and tolerant society' (my emphasis). This characterisation of the memorial as 'sacred' because based on deaths – constructed here, in contrast to elsewhere in the Park, as 'willing sacrifices' – is typical of the validating function of the war memorial (Warner, 2011: 164; Mosse, 1990). The Pledge goes on to ask the reader to 'remember the solidarity and trust that developed between Protestant and Catholic Soldiers when they served together in these trenches.' It concludes by stating that: 'a fitting tribute to the principles for which men and women from the Island of Ireland died in both World Wars would be permanent peace.'

Such a declaration deliberately and necessarily fails to specify what these 'principles' were in the case of the Great War. Unionists would probably emphasise the mention in the pledge of the 'defence of democracy'. Nationalists would point to its reference to the 'rights of all nations' and Republicans would shake their heads and have to make do with the despairing and accusatory comments on the 'gravestones'. And ultimately they need not agree on the principles, or lack of them, that motivated engagement in the conflict but simply acknowledge the *outcome* of such action. It is the shared 'collective memory' of death and injury that enables this place to work to bring together such opposed groups as IRA and UVF paramilitaries. And in making these connections it could be seen as working to create not only a new collective memory but indeed, following Halbwachs' argument, a new collective (2011: 143). If a memory is shared by a group this unites the group and identifies it to itself and its Others (Durkheim 1915). As a new collective memory is formed so a new *group* is formed. Who they are united with, identify themselves as and identify themselves against shifts. And the memorial encourages one 'collective' memory of the losses of both the Great War and the Troubles.

Other interventions have been made in the discourse of Remembrance that have opened it up to new perspectives, new questions and new meanings. Graham and Shirlow (2002)

argued that increased remembrance of the Somme, a key 'identity narrative' for Loyalists due to the history of the UVF/36th, can be read as an attempt to construct a stronger sense of Loyalist identity that is not dependent on official unionism, sectarian Orangeism or distant Britain. Instead it emphasises the historical and continuing exploitation and betrayal of the protestant loyal working class by all three. Such an analysis would suggest that it is not just family histories of life and death in the trenches that are shared with working class republicans. The possibilities such perceived commonalities might have opened up may well have subsequently receded with the relative decline of the Progressive Unionist Party and the loss of such powerful voices as their leader David Ervine and mentor Gusty Spence. Yet the recent mural on the Shankill (described in chapter 7) commemorating the life of local PUP councillor Hugh Smyth explicitly states that both Catholic and Protestant [working class] have been treated as third-class citizens. Brown (2007), however, rejects Graham and Shirlow's analysis, seeing instead an emphasis on the British link. Yet he too identifies the use of the link to the Somme by Loyalist political leaders as enabling them, through its conferral of authority and authenticity through a memory of historical sacrifice, to communicate difficult messages to their supporters and thus facilitate movement in the politics of the peace process.

The field of publishing has seen a trickle of works in the 1990s dealing with Irish involvement in the war turn into a flood. Lucy and McClure's (1997) *Remembrance*, discussed in chapter 5, is a good example of a text that, like the Peace Park, features a range of voices and perspectives not normally heard in the discourse of Remembrance in Northern Ireland. These include the contribution of well-known socialist writer and activist Eamonn McCann who uses the opportunity to state: 'When we think of the Somme, as we should every year, we should rage against those responsible for sending young men of Ulster, and from all corners of Ireland and Britain, out to die so uselessly, in such droves.' (p.128) These words, appearing in a publication of the Ulster Society, gain power through the novelty of their intervention in such a space. Starrett's words at the Peace Park have a not dissimilar power both through their break with the usual memorial language of pride and duty and also their physicality: they are literally carved in stone. In granite. And all we have learnt of such words, chiselled into the masonry of memory, and echoing from the mouths of the 'sacred' dead gives them significant power in the shaping of the discourse, in the shaping of our understanding of the meaning of war.

The Malleability of Meaning: Intertextual Remembering

In Northern Ireland the meanings of the texts and practices of Remembrance have been shaped by the local contexts and the power and interests of a variety of institutions. This has led to some memorials being seen as central markers of national and local identity whilst others have become irrelevant at best to the people in their location. The use of the same texts and practices to commemorate and celebrate soldiers of not only the Great War but also more recent conflicts including several controversial decades in Ireland inevitably shapes the meaning of such signs, for some on the island, as anti-Irish. The equivalence built up between Loyalist paramilitaries and British Great War soldiers, as described in chapter 7, has further problematized Nationalist engagement with Remembrance. Such locally produced meanings are overlaid with others shared more widely that view Remembrance of the Great War critically because of its perceived celebration rather than commemoration of that war, and its lack of emphasis on the disastrous and morally bankrupt consequences of militarism and imperialism.

 The Peace Park and other memorials that focus predominantly on the Great War, stress the role of nationalists in the war, and pose strong critiques of the conflict, attempt to elide or work against such problematic elements of Remembrance. The tours organised by Glen Barr's International School for Peace Studies (ISPS) construct a narrative, using an accumulation of interpretations of a carefully ordered set of battlefield monuments and the example of the shared history of the 36th and 16th divisions, both to encourage an optimistic perspective on the potential for 'cross-community' cooperation in Northern Ireland and also to warn of the potential consequences of any return to war on the island.[3] In such ways do 'memory choreographers' (Allen, 2015: 28) do their work. Interviews between 2011-2016 with the organiser Glen Barr, ex-paramilitaries who have taken the tour and some of the first group of Gaelic Athletic Association (GAA) members to be involved have presented a consistent reading of the narrative being constructed and the purpose behind it.

Yet, this consistency notwithstanding, the meaning of the Park is still, of course, subject to the perspectives and needs of different readers. As Rigney observes, memory initiatives involve 'multiple actors who are not always reading from the same page' (2012: 253). This is perhaps most ironically illustrated by the fact that the two founders of the project, Glen Barr and Paddy Harte, fell out – apparently over the *meaning* of the monument. (Harte managed to complete a whole book on the project without once mentioning his co-chair by

name. Barr warns that, in his book, he won't be so nice…). Barr complains that Harte wished the Tower to become a sacred site for Irish nationalists as a counterpart to the role the Ulster Tower plays for Unionists. The letterhead of Harte's subsequent organisation 'A Journey of Remembering' displayed the two symbols in such opposition. This approach is an example of what David Fitzpatrick, one of the first writers in Ireland to encourage a re-engagement with Ireland's past in the war, believes to be an inherent problem with recent attempts to retell this story. Constructing such simplistic dichotomies as 36th/16th or Unionist/Nationalist leads to the oversimplifying of what was a much more complex political and cultural landscape (2013: 126). As Graff-McRae observes, much commemorative practice can thus also 'serve to reinforce and re-inscribe lines of conflict while attempting (or claiming) to eradicate them' (2010: 95). Barr's position, that the Guillemont Cross and the Ulster Tower could be used in such a way but that the Round Tower should be developed as a symbol and a site for all, acknowledges present perspectives and affiliations but offers up a common alternative open to a more complex range of subjectivities. King's (1999) observation that memorial building has often had a main function of social unification can be usefully applied to this project - despite the founders' subsequent disagreements.

> The unanimity that had, ultimately, to be achieved in order to realize the project, announced in advance the transcendent, unifying character of the memorial. It showed that such unanimity was not merely an ideal, but could be achieved in practice when the living adequately remembered their dead. (1999: 165)

Whilst the memory work aimed at reconciliation and involving Remembrance has found a great deal of support on the island and achieved some visible changes in relationships, particularly between Republicans and Loyalists (McCaffrey, 2003; also interviews with Glen Barr and Sinn Fein's Tom Hartley), it can be criticised on certain grounds. For example, the prime participants in most commemorations of military losses are the military organisations themselves in the form of senior officers, military bands and flag-bearers, veterans organisations and others with a close affinity for and support of the military. All this shapes the discourse of Remembrance in a way that could be seen to 'militate' against attempts to *challenge* the glory of fighting and death. It also presents the military, and in Northern Ireland the paramilitary groups, with recurrent opportunities to perform their role as sacred defenders of morality and life and to reconfirm their hierarchical position in this ritual enactment of the 'cult' (Connerton, 1989: 70; Bastide, 2011: 160).

Brian Hanley is one who perceives the development in Ireland of an uncritical attitude to the Great War as a result of increased engagement with Remembrance which he describes as attempts 'not just to remember but to justify and embrace' the war (2013: 109). Whilst this can be a danger at any memorial depending upon the meanings it produces the Island of Ireland Peace Park *does* contain the symbolic resources, e.g. the critical voices of those who fought, to encourage a use that challenges the dominant militarised memory of the war. This has been made possible by the inclusion of previously excluded voices and also by the passage of time. These voices can be understood as the 'traces' (Burkhardt cited by A. Assman, 2010: 98) left behind and stored in the 'archive'. They are, as described by Peter Burke 'the skeletons in the cupboard of social memory' (2011: 192). When 'the time is right' or, to demystify it, when power working through a variety of institutions allows, encourages and supports the presentation of such interventions in the discourse, these 'cupboards', the archives of the professional historian, the public storyteller and the keepers of the family secrets, are opened up and these traces transfer from the archive to the canon of active 'memories' of the past. Thus, the work of the 'memory entrepreneurs' (Jelin, 2003), Harte and Barr, bore fruit due to the support of a range of influential institutions.

In the case of the Peace Park some of the key institutions that enabled this change were the various militaristic groups engaged in the Troubles in Northern Ireland. The paramilitary ceasefires, in particular, enabled the Park to be built and then used as a site for both formal and informal commemorative practices which used the 'shared sacrifice' of Messines to attempt reconciliation across the divides of the more recent conflict. The most widely reported of these practices may have been events such as the opening that brought together the Irish and British heads of state but at least as significant have been the many trips, organised largely by Barr's ISPS, that have brought many mixed 'cross-community' groups as well as groups from Gaelic Athletic Association (GAA) clubs, Orange Lodges, and also, crucially, separate and mixed groups of ex-paramilitaries, from 'both sides' of these divides to share the experience of the Park and the many other memorials of the Western Front. On such 'neutral ground', away from the demarcated spaces of home, and with this example of shelved difference, shared experience and universal loss, these groups are encouraged, by the memorial texts in the Park and beyond, to reflect on their own experience of conflict and, through the practice of their joint visits, on the humanity of their Other. This results in what one ex-Loyalist paramilitary and regular tour participant describes as 'a road to Damascus experience' which he has observed not only in himself but

also in almost all who undertake the tour. Thus, this unheroic monument, with its grim and bitter constructions of the discourse of conflict, and with its meanings constructed through such imaginative use, serves also as a Troubles memorial.

No permanent public monument to all these deaths exists in Northern Ireland. The Island of Ireland Peace Park, through an ostensible focus on events of long ago and far away, can be read as intertextually raising the 'memory' of all deaths through conflict and, in particular, those of the Troubles. This can be understood to work with an added strength for those combatants who have made sense of their own role in the conflict through placing it within a discourse of martial duty and patriotism. This could be argued to work particularly strongly within Loyalist paramilitary circles due to their explicit intertextual construction of the equivalence between themselves and soldiers of the Great War. It does not explicitly address the deaths of non-combatants: those who, as Anne Dolan puts it, just 'carried on carrying on' (2013: 151) and in this it remains consistent with the vast majority of war memorials. However, in intertextually translating the waste of the trenches to the streets of Northern Ireland it implicitly draws in those victims of a conflict where the lines between combatant and civilian were less clearly drawn.

This 'Irish' case has arisen in a particular context and cannot simply be replicated elsewhere but its example encourages us to consider how, particularly at a time of a renewed focus on the Great War, we can produce public texts that could, through a use of 'memory' traces of the Great War, construct bridges of commonality across divided populations and simultaneously challenge the glorification of violent conflict.

Barr's Peace School has taken over 6000 visitors from Northern Ireland to Messines. The experience has been praised by individuals from across the perceived political spectrum in the region. As one participant, in an interview with the author, described part of the tour:

> And then we heard about the battle at [Messines] where they actually fought side-by-side. And Private Meek helped Major Redmond. And they worked together. And if they could work together – two groups who really hated each other … that there is this shared history. And then we can have a shared future. It was a very powerful message. […] I think everybody came back totally changed. Eyes opened.

The ISPS has established the 'Fellowship of Messines' and local 'Friends of Messines' groups to support individuals who have been to Messines in sustaining, deepening and extending new connections and going on to lead conflict transformation initiatives in their own communities across Northern Ireland. A report on the Messines project commissioned by the North East Peace Partnership concluded that: '

The impact of this programme is likely to be very significant in the years to come in terms of being a precipitator for other peace building activities at local level.' (Blu Zebra, 2011: 89)

It saw the project as so effective that it recommended not only that it should be included in the school curriculum but that it should also be part of the induction process for all elected local politicians (ibid: 94). The School Links project run by the ISPS already brings together pupils from different backgrounds on trips to Messines during which, as one teacher explained, their perspectives change radically:

The young people went to Messines as one kind of person and came back another, fired up to promote change and tolerance in their own country. […] The shift in attitudes, a shift that I have been battling so hard to create in my own classroom for over a decade, was happening in front of my own eyes in the space of six days. (from ISPS website)

Conclusion

The Island of Ireland Peace Park is an example of a *lieu de mémoire* (Nora 1996b) whose conception, design and use exploit the malleability of the meaning of such phenomena. It constructs a story of the past using 'forgotten' 'traces' and, in the process, transfers them from the archive of 'passive' memory to the canon of 'active' memory (A. Assman 2010). In doing this it aims to redress the imbalance in the dominant discourse, or collective memory, of Irish involvement in the Great War. It works to reinsert the story of the patriotic Irish nationalists who, in their tens of thousands, responded to their political leaders calls to enlist in the British Army and died, in their thousands, in the Flanders mud and elsewhere. In reshaping the memory of the war in this way it offers it up as a potential shared memory across current political and conflictual divides. It uses shared memory to make possible a potential sense of shared identity, to break down some of the hierarchical binaries (Derrida, 1976) that shape the Irish/British political landscape, and to work towards the potential to construct a *new, combined, 'collective'*.

At the same time, through its choice of 'traces' to carve into granite, it intervenes in the discursively constructed (Foucault, 1972) memory of the Great War. The eye-witness quotes selected, mostly break with the stock approaches to memorialisation of the war – the 'myth' (Barthes, 1972) of honour, glory and sacrifice – and instead construct the war as horrific, brutal, and exploitative. This positions the memorial as an unheroic '*anti-war memorial'*. Such critical perspectives had to be included if the monument hoped to be able

to be accessible to the various political groups on the island. Yet it was also the passage of time that allowed this monument to take a more critical stance towards the war than the mass of memorials constructed in the 1920s and 1930s. This alerts us to the possibility, particularly during the centenary years, of reshaping the discourse of the war more widely through the imaginative design of new memorials.

This critique of the war was, in the case of the Peace Park, part of an explicit project that aimed to use this story of the past to shape the politics of the present. As well as the explicit linking of the Great War with present day Northern Ireland in the 'Peace Pledge' at the Park, it also works intertextually to build on discursive work on the streets of Northern Ireland which has long established an equivalence between paramilitaries and soldiers, and particularly between Loyalist paramilitaries and soldiers of the Great War, to encourage a reading of its anti-war sentiments as relevant to the Northern Irish Troubles. In this neutral space, far from the demarcated territory of Northern Ireland, the tragic consequences for all parties in such conflicts can be acknowledged. In the process the monument, through allusion and intertextuality, can function as not only a Great War memorial but also a Troubles memorial. This unspoken meaning is communicated to visitors through the narrative constructed by the International School for Peace Studies guides which emphasises shared suffering and the necessity of cooperation. Their practice of bringing mixed groups from across the divides in Northern Ireland, including ex-paramilitaries, to the Park and nearby monuments encourages this reading to be produced in the key groups in the conflict and taken back by them to the streets of the North. This is supported by the Fellowship of Messines and Friends of Messines schemes which encourage individuals who have undergone the 'Messines Experience' to communicate this memory and perspective more widely and lead conflict transformation initiatives in their local communities.

The texts in the Park are given meaning by these practices of remembering and all this is facilitated, encouraged and shaped by those institutions with the power to intervene in these discourses. These, for this project, have included national governments, local councils, the business community, historians both professional and amateur, community groups of all kinds across Northern Ireland and beyond, and, crucially, the paramilitary groups. The engagement of all of these has enabled a remembering and questioning of memories of both the conflict in the mud of Flanders and in the streets and lanes of Ireland. Changes in perspective on one can lead to changes in perspective on the other and,

in the course of this, a recognition of that shared suffering that Renan (1882) saw as, tragically, the key ingredient for a sense of nation.

Chapter 10   Theorising Remembrance

Defining Remembrance

Remembrance in this study has referred to those signifying practices and the texts they produce and mobilise that ostensibly function to commemorate those who have died whilst serving in the military forces of their country. 'Their country' here is not as straightforward a term as one might think. My focus has been on the discourse of Remembrance as it has developed in what was initially still the heart of the British Empire and is now the 'United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland' and the 'Republic of Ireland'. Such Remembrance developed initially to commemorate the dead of the First World War, or Great War, as it was then known by the British. Whilst it has adapted to include the dead of the Second World War and subsequent conflicts it is still, I would argue, dominated by 'collective memories' of the Great War. Such commemoration is not, of course, exclusive to these 'nations' and many of the theoretical observations I will make here should prove useful in an analysis of other such discursive practices.

Remembrance is the use of key signifiers to discursively reconstruct narratives of deaths in the past which implicitly reference parallel narratives of lives in the present and the future. These narratives of death can best be understood using Barthes (1972) concept of 'myth'. Barthes uses the term not to categorise some stories as 'untrue' but rather as having become so established, so dominant, that it is difficult to consider alternative narratives or interpretations because it never occurs to us that the myth is, like all knowledge, a construct with its origins in a particular group with their own understanding of the world and their own interests to protect in their telling of stories about that world. In this case the myths being mobilised are the established, naturalised and thus depoliticised stories of military death and the nation. The target audiences for these myths are various but of primacy is the group whose 'sons' are being commemorated. It is they who are encouraged to be participants in the discursive reconstruction of the myth. They perform as 'office-holders' or observers of the practices and play their part in displaying the texts of Remembrance. They construct, populate and mobilise the institutions that design, maintain and police these practices and texts. They shape the discourse of Remembrance – how it is thought about, talked about and lived. This audience is, at some times and in some places more than others, aware of another audience. Remembrance is an act of identification and

such acts require at least one Other. In the case I am exploring there are a range of 'Others' and the discourse of Remembrance contains multiple narratives aimed at each one. Remembrance also has a multitude of functions within society and I shall be setting out what my research has led me to believe some of these to be.

The Functions of Remembrance

The primary function of Remembrance changes with the passage of time since the deaths of those being commemorated. Initially, the function of Remembrance is to provide some comfort to those grieving for the dead. This encourages such deaths to be constructed as glorious and serving some higher purpose. This cathartic impact of war memorials and commemoration was for Winter (1995: 19) their main purpose. In this way they function similarly to the family funeral: a validation of the worth of the life lost, a declaration of the love of those bereaved, an opportunity for a reminder and restatement of the membership of the group, and a cathartic rite of passage into a different world with changed relationships and responsibilities. Some Remembrance can be seen to fit such a description where the mourning for the dead being remembered is still fresh and the rips in life still raw. Where Remembrance, however, is of the long dead, as is clearly the case for Remembrance of the Great War, such a function is unlikely to still be in operation.

The primary function of *ongoing* Remembrance, therefore, and a key function of all Remembrance at any time, is to maintain group solidarity and the group which would typically be invoked is 'the nation'. Remembrance is thus usually aimed at maintaining national solidarity. It uses statements that construct and claim a shared memory to reinforce a perception of the existence of the group *as* a group and to maintain the unity of that group. Remembrance is of central importance to the construction and maintenance of 'the nation' for two reasons. The first is that it is an opportunity to retell the story of the 'national' army and thus of national shared experiences and causes. For those states, like the United Kingdom, who have no obvious national day, of 'Independence' or 'Liberation', or a confusion of 'national' days, because of a profusion of 'nations' within the state and thus various 'national' saints' days, a day of Remembrance and the signifiers that surround and construct it provides a focal point for a demonstration of the existence and importance of the nation. For this reason Remembrance Sunday is *the* 'British' national day (Poulter, 2009a; Elgenius, 2005). It constructs a shared memory of collective action that transcends

borders, either within the UK or, originally, within the Empire. In the construction of the narrative the various constituent parts of the 'nation' are deliberately woven together to promote a sense of unity. In their broadcasting of the Remembrance Sunday ceremony at the Cenotaph in London the state broadcaster, the BBC, as well as showing this carefully choreographed performance of the national 'family' also cuts away to outside broadcast units at locations that draw together the various territories within the United Kingdom both in terms of national borders and the rural and the urban (Poulter, 2009a).

For those 'nations' within this empire that had no 'national' army, such as Australia and Canada, the First World War is popularly seen as having been the 'moment' when these 'nations' 'proved' themselves on the battlefield. By this was meant that they had managed to enlist enough volunteers from their population to put an 'army' in the field and that this army had 'acquitted itself with honour'. One might have thought that some evidence of military success would also be required in order to demonstrate that such a 'nation' had the clear capacity to defend itself and thus be to some extent an autonomous actor on the world stage. However, being able to present little if any evidence of such success by no means hampers their narrative. Indeed Renan's observation that 'Where national memories are concerned, griefs are of more value than triumphs' (1990 [1882]: 63) would appear to be borne out by the way in which 'nations' such as Australia (Gallipoli), Canada (Vimy Ridge) and Ireland (the Easter Rising) have focused, in their core discourse of Remembrance, not on the victories their forces won but on the disastrous defeats they endured. The Loyalists of Ulster who for over a century centralised the story of a resounding victory (King William's vanquishing of King James at the battle of the Boyne in 1690) have, more recently, emphasised instead their role in the disastrous first day of the battle of the Somme. Such a shift could be argued to have occurred simultaneously with a perceived need to demonstrate their distinctiveness and autonomy first, from 1916 into the 1920s, from the rest of Ireland and then, from the mid-1980s, from either both Ireland and Great Britain if one is persuaded by the arguments of Graham and Shirlow (2002) or solely the Republic of Ireland if one is more convinced by Brown's (2007) counter-argument that sees no evidence of anti-British sentiment, post Anglo-Irish (Hillsborough) Agreement, in Somme commemoration.

This is the second reason that Remembrance is central to the construction and maintenance of the nation – its potential for the evocation of suffering. To quote Renan again: 'suffering in common unifies more than joy does' because such shared sufferings

'impose duties, and require common effort' (op cit). Chief amongst these duties is the requirement to continue the 'defence' of the nation. As the last verse of John McCrae's 1915 poem 'In Flanders Field' describes it:

> Take up our quarrel with the foe / To you from failing hands we throw / The torch; be yours to hold it high. / If ye break faith with us who die / We shall not sleep, though poppies grow / In Flanders fields.'

This belligerent verse departs dramatically from the first two which, with their poignant laments, could have been the milder output of the well-known British (anti-) war poets. It is, however, the most used of the verses in Belfast where it appears on various Loyalist memorials and murals including the one in the UVF's Somme Garden of Reflection which not only set out the words but also dramatically illustrated them (Fig.125).

Fig.125. 'To you from falling hands we throw the torch', mural, 1st Shankill Somme Garden of Reflection, Shankill Road, July 2016. © John Poulter

This has subsequently been replaced by another which moves on to Moina Michael's 1918 poem 'We Shall Keep the Faith' which proclaims that 'We caught the torch you threw / And holding high, we keep the Faith / With All who died' and goes on to promise 'Fear not that

ye have died for naught; / We'll teach the lesson that ye wrought / In Flanders Fields.'
(Fig.126).

We Shall Keep the Faith

Oh! you who sleep in Flanders Fields,
Sleep sweet - to rise anew!
We caught the torch you threw
And holding high, we keep the Faith
With All who died.

We cherish, too, the poppy red
That grows on fields where valor led;
It seems to signal to the skies
That blood of heroes never dies,
But lends a lustre to the red
Of the flower that blooms above the dead
In Flanders Fields.

And now the Torch and Poppy Red
We wear in honor of our dead.
Fear not that ye have died for naught;
We'll teach the lesson that ye wrought
In Flanders Fields.

Somme Soldiers
Killed Wounded Missing
36th (Ulster) Division
32,186

THEIR NAME LIVETH FOR EVERMORE

Fig.126. 'We keep the faith with all who died', replacement mural, 1st Shankill Somme Garden of Reflection, November 2016. © John Poulter

Those fighting against the Empire displayed similar sentiment and imagery as can be seen on a memorial to IRA leader John MacBride in Westport on which his words of 1914

proclaim: 'And thank God Irishmen will always be found, to snatch up the torch from the slumbering fire, to hold it aloft as a guiding light, and to hand it on, blazing afresh, to the succeeding generation.' Remembrance of dead soldiers of the nation is a reminder of this requirement of the succeeding generations. The 'torch' – the nation – must not be allowed to die. We owe it to our ancestors who died for all subsequent generations and thus we also owe it to the as yet unborn of the nation. Remembrance thus collapses time. Past, present and future coexist in its all-embracing narrative.

Within this narrative the death of the soldier needs to be presented as an act of self-sacrifice that both achieves supernatural results – the birth, validation and continuation of the nation – and also thus establishes the debt of loyalty owed by subsequent generations to these soldiers – with the correct current recipient of such a debt presented as the nation. The coinage of such a debt is support of and obedience to the state, particularly when it comes to issues of war. The discourse of Remembrance, therefore, also functions to present the deaths being commemorated as corresponding to this pattern of self-sacrifice. Just as Prost (1997: 330) observed that commemoration in France of the Great War made use of existing symbols of Catholicism familiar to the participants, so the availability within the culture of a religion with a 'life-giving' death at its heart, such as Christianity, is exploited for its easily applicable foundational narrative of self-sacrifice and suffering in the cause of salvation of others. A common text on the Loyalist memorials of the Shankill is the extract from the Gospel of St John: 'Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends' (John, 13: 15). These words are also part of the brief, but framing, religious ceremony at Remembrance events at the cenotaph. 'His friends' is here understood to mean not only his close comrades in the field or the community back home but that 'imagined community' (Anderson, 1983) of the nation. The producers of the memorial boards erected on the Shankill in the summer of 2016 to commemorate the local men killed in the Great War made sure that this was the reading (Fig.127). Even in this area where the dead were a part of one of the famous 'Pals' battalions it was not 'friends' that survived in the quotation. The boards stated that: 'Greater love hath no man than this, that he lay down his life for King and Country'. This demonstrates the workings of Foucault's 'power/knowledge' (1980). Those with the power to produce these boards and then place them in the heart of this community also have the power to shape the meaning of these deaths: to state what it was that all these men died 'for'. Their power both presents and validates this knowledge.

Fig.127. 'Bring them Home' Poppy board, near site of Court Street, Shankill Road, Belfast, July 2016. © John Poulter

It is essential that the meaning of these deaths is so constructed and this is done through the use of a range of practices and the mobilisation of a variety of texts. The narration of the BBC broadcasting of Remembrance, for instance, makes sure to emphasise this perspective and this is made easier due to the nature of the texts and practices being

mediated. The only description of these slaughtered young men on the cenotaph at the heart of the 'Empire' in London is 'The Glorious Dead'. The religious ceremony implicitly constructs, as detailed above, the equivalence between the self-sacrifice of Jesus Christ to save mankind and the 'self-sacrifice' of each dead soldier to save the nation. Although referring to either as *self*-sacrifice ignores the role of 'the Father'. 'For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only son' (John 3: 16). This aspect of the transaction needs to also be implicit in the proceedings of Remembrance. The role of the 'fathers' is crucial. Many of the 'men' being commemorated were still in their teens. The influence of their parent generation was essential in maintaining a steady flow of recruits. We are reminded that these parents did, indeed, follow God's unselfish example and that it is our duty, should the situation arise, to follow suit. The mobilisation of religious tropes continues with the ritual of the playing of the 'Last Post', the dipping of the flags, then the playing of 'Reveille' as the flags are raised back up. This is another implicit intertextual construction of the deaths as not being the end but rather, as with Christ and the setting of the sun, only the precursor to glorious and triumphant resurrection and the dawn of a new and purer life. The central signifier of Remembrance in the UK, the poppy, is itself also a signifier of new life arising out of turmoil and destruction due to its abundance in the bare and ostensibly lifeless soil exposed by some sort of churning, usually ploughing or digging but in the landscape of the First World War also bombardment. These are just some of the most obvious ways in which the texts and practices of remembrance intertextually construct the deaths of soldiers as selfless, glorious, transient and magically protective of the nation.

Constructing the meaning of the deaths in this way is also an essential element in the maintenance of national solidarity. The act of 'remembering' is designed to shut down political analysis of the events that brought about the deaths and, in particular, the quality of leadership that allowed, or more usually encouraged, these events to happen (Bushaway, 1992: 161; Graff-McRae, 2010). That the dead died willingly and never questioned the orders they were given nor the role and motives of those who gave them is an implicit part of the discourse of Remembrance. If these 'sacred' martyrs were satisfied with the integrity and ability of our leaders then who are we to question their continuing power and position? Moreover, if such questions should be surfacing in the minds of the survivors the ritualistic nature of ceremonies and the sacred construction of the texts connected with it render any intervention in this discourse both unpatriotic and sacrilegious. In this way Remembrance not only maintains solidarity but also ensures the maintenance of the status quo.

This is another key function of Remembrance. It provides an opportunity for a restatement and reproduction of the hierarchy of the group. At the Cenotaph in London the ceremony places all the actors in positions which speak of their place in this hierarchy. Even where such distinctions would seem to have been deliberately suspended for the occasion one can still perceive a ranking in the ordering of politicians, foreign diplomats and religious and military leaders. The last group to arrive at the monument, the Royal Family, display such ranking most obviously whilst also simultaneously displaying the unity of the family and, by extension, the unity of the nation. At those other geographical sites of memory, the war cemeteries of the Western Front and elsewhere, hierarchy is cancelled out. The deliberate uniformity of the design of the headstones and the democracy of names being listed in alphabetical rather than rank order on monuments was designed to make a statement of equality and solidarity. Here is Benedict Anderson's 'deep horizontal comradeship' of the imagined community of the nation (op cit). The First World War provides ample material for making such a claim. The rate of attrition for young officers was at least as high as for the ordinary private and death visited all classes of society. But at the memorials back home Remembrance provides the opportunity for the re-enactment of the cult as well as for the reproduction of the relevant hierarchies – of the nation, the city and the local community.

In Belfast this can be seen at the cenotaph in the city centre. Its positioning, design and materials construct it as an extension of City Hall (Fig.128). This confers authority on the monument and sanctity and legitimacy on the seat of administration.

Fig.128. Belfast Cenotaph and City Hall, Belfast, July 2013. © John Poulter

The sectioning off of the garden for the numerous regiments being remembered demonstrates the power of these organisations to have space allotted to them. The ceremonies may be attended by a variety of religious leaders but it is only the minister from the 'established', i.e. establishment, church – the 'Anglican' Church of Ireland – that is given leave to speak. The first wreath is laid, as in London, by the head of state, the Queen, or rather by her representative, the Lord Lieutenant of the County Borough of Belfast. Also in the front rank laying wreaths are representatives of the UK government, the Assembly at Stormont and the city council as well as the ambassadors of foreign states. Whilst the majority of the wreaths are from the various branches of the military forces, their old comrades associations and their charitable supporter the Royal British Legion the rest of the wreaths represent the 'loyal' institutions such as the Orange Order, the Apprentice Boys and the main political parties bar Sinn Fein. At the local memorials on the Shankill those parading and laying wreaths are demonstrating their membership of other loyal institutions such as the UVF, the RHC, the UDA/UFF, and the various old comrades' organisations of these groups. It is an opportunity to demonstrate persistence, hierarchy and power: the power to organise, to control and to appropriate local space. Remembrance parades power.

An understanding of the importance of the perception of *persistence* to the nation leads us to another function of Remembrance of the Great War in particular. Its power as a memory resource is, in part, its distance in time. This is because another of the key functions of Remembrance is as an opportunity to *demonstrate* the *persistence* of the nation. All nations require a long history (c.f. e.g. Hobsbawn, 1996) and commemoration of events of long ago in which it featured provides a perfect public exhibition of such credentials. On the Shankill this claim to persistence and thus legitimacy is made by both main Loyalist paramilitary groups and the memory resources of Remembrance have been used to construct an equivalence between the Loyalist, and particularly UVF, paramilitary and the soldier of the Great War. This is aided by the historical connection between the 36th (Ulster) Division and the original UVF. Their modern namesakes see themselves as also bearing the same responsibility in the cause of fighting Irish Nationalism/Republicanism. This perspective has formed part of the collective memory of the community for the last hundred years. It has been reproduced through the texts and practices of Remembrance and supported through the involvement of key institutions such as the Orange Order, the Unionist parties and the paramilitary groups themselves. Thus the confident and unashamed use of the signifiers of Remembrance – the phrases, poppies, silhouettes of soldiers in no-man's-land, etc. – in memorials to and celebrations of the paramilitary groups and their individual members. This provides them with history, persistence and legitimacy. In the process it changes the meaning of Remembrance and the signs of Remembrance. This is part of the reason why most Nationalists and Republicans decline to use the poppy in their engagement with Remembrance.

Persistence of the nation is also signified through the apparently unchanging form that the practices and texts of Remembrance take over the years. These 'ancient' traditions construct a discourse of permanence, continuity and immutability. Analysis of the content of Remembrance over the years, however, shows that whilst much remains the same there are discernible changes that are made to suit the political needs of the present and related to changes in 'membership' of the nation.

This is another function of Remembrance: that it provides an opportunity to reshape *who is the group*. This can be seen in revisions to Remembrance in London that included representatives of a wider range of faiths being part of the assembly around the Cenotaph. This wasn't because adherents of these faiths had suddenly arrived in the country but that they had finally been granted 'membership' of the nation. A similar rationale can be seen

behind the construction of a memorial on Constitution Hill in London in 2004 commemorating the many soldiers from around the Empire who won medals for bravery (the Victoria Cross and George Cross) whilst serving in the British Army. Record of this hadn't suddenly been uncovered but rather the government of the day believed it to be in the interests of the country – and here we would see 'national solidarity' as the aim – if such contributions to the 'national cause' were more widely known. This 'reclamation' of 'forgotten' memory involved moving memory from the 'archive' to the 'canon' (Alieda Assman, 2010: 89). As such it became added to the texts that discursively construct our understanding of 'the war', the Empire, and the nation. It is a discursive intervention in the sense that it challenges and visibly alters the construction of the discourse. It provides material with which to challenge the myths and, one day, it too may become part of the new myth. It will not do so, however, without overcoming some resistance. When taking photographs of the memorial I overheard a woman ask her companion angrily 'Where's one [a memorial] to us though?!'. This part of London is *saturated* with memorials to 'us'.

In the Irish context the discursive interventions that have recently changed Remembrance include: recognition of the role of the 16th and 10th (Irish) Divisions as well as the mythical 36th (Ulster) Division; the laying of laurel wreaths by representatives of the government of the Irish Republic at the main Remembrance ceremony; the laying of laurel wreaths by Belfast Republicans before the main ceremony; the construction of the Island of Ireland Peace Park and visits there of both Republicans and Loyalists; and the appearance of the poppy with the lily in murals on the Falls Road. The enlistment of Irish Nationalist in the British Army in the Great War has not been newly uncovered but it has been relatively newly disinterred from the archive and established firmly within the canon of Remembrance on the island. This is an opportunity to reshape collective memory and thus, following Halbwachs (1992), the collective itself. The extent to which such a reshaping changes the collective is open to argument but when an episode like the Great War has come to occupy such a central place in a group's narrative of what has gone to make them who they are it is difficult to believe that the realisation that your Other also shared in that formative experience does not have some discernible impact on the perceived identities of each group and, in particular, the differences between them that have always been presented as key markers of those identities.

Activists behind such projects as the Island of Ireland Peace Park which use this reshaping of the discourse of Remembrance deliberately state that they are not interested in or

attempting to challenge anyone's identity. They are merely trying to construct some 'common ground' upon which relationships can be changed and potential co-operation promoted. The Irish government would also not dream of publically suggesting that their aim in engaging with Remembrance was to reshape the sense of identity of Unionists in the North in such a way that they felt less disturbed by the prospect of a united Ireland. Such a statement would inevitably be counter-productive. Yet their discursive memory work is clearly part of a long-term strategy of breaking down such discourses of division in order to undermine the myth of the distinctiveness of the populations of the two polities on the island.

One of the key groups of signifiers of these distinctions is those texts and practices that signify the military forces of the Crown and 'the Republic' in Northern Ireland. These categories need some detailing. The forces of the Crown would include not just the British Army but also the police force and, from their perspective and the perspective of their Republican opponents, Loyalist paramilitaries. The forces of the Republic, in this case, would be those Republican paramilitaries, both modern and of a century ago, who fought the forces of the Crown and who have always claimed to be the true heirs of the Rising and thus a legitimate national army. These two groupings are the main drivers of differing forms of Remembrance on the island. As is typical with Remembrance it is a discourse primarily promoted and policed by such military organisations. Indeed, if one ignores the parochial disagreements between the two what is clear is that both are promoting the same thing – militarism.

This promotion of militarism is another function of Remembrance. As Graff-McCrae (2010: 5) argues, the very success of such commemorations acts to establish a hierarchical relationship that privileges conflict over consensus. The myths of the warrior and the warrior's death are at the heart of these militaristic discourses and the practices of Remembrance involve shows of military strength and organisation accompanied by the alluring trappings of the uniform, the weaponry and the other signifiers of the soldier. One of the difficult challenges for Sinn Fein is to retain control of Republican practices of remembrance whilst discouraging the choice of militarism still on offer from the 'dissident' Republican groups. For the British Army there are no such problems and promotion of militarism is an obvious and welcome function of Remembrance. One could ask whether highlighting 'death in service' would be bad for recruitment but, as argued above, such a death is packaged in a very saleable form indeed. It also constructs it as the epitome of

masculinity. This is another part of the construction of social hierarchies. The Queen might be laying the first wreath in London and her female representative in Belfast but after that, and elsewhere, Remembrance is a very male 'affair'.

The fact that Remembrance, as currently structured, valorises militarism at the expense of politics and compromise could be argued to render it a terminally unsuitable vehicle for co-operation, reconciliation and peace. Its ability to command the attention and respect of many of the combatants, from all sides, however, makes it a valuable site on which to come together. As Sinn Fein's absence from the main Remembrance ceremonies demonstrates, this is rendered impossible whilst the British Army is so predominantly present and the soldiers being commemorated include those who until recently were at war with Republicans . Coming together with their Loyalist opponents to remember the soldiers of their grandparents' generation who fought in a different war, and on the same side, however, does offer this opportunity to establish common ground. The militaristic myth of the warrior has the potential in this company to encourage interest and involvement and thus the potential for co-operation and changed relationships.

On this common ground it is also possible that Remembrance can offer the space and the circumstances in which males can channel personal mourning and sadness in a form that is acceptable in a culture where the discourse of masculinity is vigilantly policed. This is, I believe, another less obvious function of Remembrance: as a site of memory that enables the Remembrance of personal loss often unrelated to what or who is ostensibly being remembered. It is no coincidence that the young tend to be less interested in Remembrance. The grey heads at Remembrance ceremonies all carry memories of personal loss and these can have little or no connection with the events or groups ostensibly being commemorated.

At other times interaction with the signifiers of Remembrance can certainly be for purposes other than those originally intended. This is clearly evidenced in Belfast where the sites of memory mobilised in Remembrance, such as the gardens of remembrance, Remembrance crosses and poppies, are used by some to commemorate civilian casualties of the Troubles and also civilian deaths in general. Remembrance has come to be seen by these people as an appropriate and available site wherein to perform their memory work. As a result of such discursive interventions, the meanings of Remembrance have been expanded out beyond the commemoration of military victims of war. This expansion has been encouraged by the way in which the signifiers of remembrance have been used by the

Loyalist paramilitaries to commemorate firstly dead paramilitary comrades, then civilian victims of the rival paramilitaries and, occasionally, the British Army, and finally have been taken up by the wider Loyalist community to be used to commemorate friends and family with no obvious membership of any military or paramilitary force.

The fluidity of the meaning of Remembrance is a useful reminder to us to beware of treating the categories of phenomena we research as fixed and unchanging. Remembrance, the UVF, the IRA, Ireland, Britain, the Somme are all categories we try to hold together and pin down but they are constantly on the move, recreated and reshaped by every iteration, every representation, every practice and every text.

The material of Remembrance

Such shifts in the meaning of signifiers demonstrate the indeterminacy of meaning (Derrida, 1976). The poppy has no 'true' meaning. It is polysemic. It can mean many different things to different people, in different places at different times or in the same place at the same time. In the rest of the UK the poppy is often claimed to be an apolitical symbol of respect for the dead. Those who publically decline to wear it when almost all others in their role are doing so – like the Channel 4 newsreader Jon Snow or the professional footballer James McClean – face bitter criticism for their 'lack of respect'. Yet its political connections are many. The individuals being commemorated are not 'innocent victims' of some catastrophe but rather people who went out with a gun in their hands and prepared to kill. Many of them died in the course of the invasion and occupation of other countries in wars whose legality and justification were deeply suspect. The marketing of the poppy by the Royal British Legion (RBL) also encourages an ambiguity around what is being supported in wearing it when their adverts encourage people to 'wear your poppy to show your support for our troops in Afghanistan'.

'British' nationalists in Great Britain have also followed the lead of Loyalism in mobilising the poppy as a signifier of their nationalistic views. The then-leader of the British National Party (BNP) was asked by the RBL in 2009 to stop permanently wearing one of their poppies (which are traditionally only worn for a couple of weeks in November) because they saw it as an attempt to exploit the appeal of the poppy for party-political gain and they were worried about damage to their brand (Taylor, 2009). Since then the poppy has become much more visible 'out of season'. The RBL now market a range of poppy-themed

jewellery, clothing and all manner of household items including dog collars and golf balls 'popular all year round' (RBL website 'Poppy Shop'). In 2012 all English Premier League clubs put the poppy on their team shirts on Remembrance weekend and this has been repeated each year since. Before games in November 2016 soldiers marched out with the teams, 'silences' were held around the centre circle, buglers sounded the Last Post and poppy wreaths were laid against the advertising hoardings. The energy and detail of the rituals at this time can be seen as a response to the rules of football's governing body, FIFA, that no political symbols can be worn on the shirt in internationals, being applied to the poppy. Part of the outraged reaction to this by those who considered this a ludicrous misperception thus included soldiers performing military rituals in the middle of football pitches. The poppy has, therefore, become semi-detached from its former role and some of its former meanings as it spreads out into the rest of the year and many new areas of culture. Recognising this, mapping and analysing it and disseminating the findings into the annual debates on the topic would be a timely and useful focus for further research.

The poppy is the most ubiquitous of the texts of Remembrance and its wearing the practice that involves the greatest number of the population but it is only one of a range of signifiers that are used in the discursive construction of Remembrance. The language of Remembrance, mostly written or selected by poets – Kipling, Binyon, McCrae – has become a central part of the discourse. Kipling's use of the biblical 'Their Name Liveth For Evermore' and Binyon's 'They shall grow not old, as we that are left grow old / Age shall not weary them, nor the years condemn / At the going down of the sun and in the morning / We shall remember them' have become central to Remembrance. 'Their Name Liveth For Evermore' is inscribed on the 'Stone of Remembrance' in every Commonwealth War Graves cemetery and Binyon's verse from 'For the Fallen' is used as an exhortation at Remembrance ceremonies with all present pledging their commitment by speaking the last line – 'We will remember them'. Such statements provide perfect material for the depoliticising of the discourse, as mentioned above. Their intonation promises much but any attempt at discerning their meaning and any possible beneficial outcomes from our intention to remember are very difficult to pin down.

The Loyalist paramilitaries have also made use of both these and related passages. Their memorials have often featured Kipling's 'Lest We Forget' and sometimes Binyon's 'At the going down…' verse. More recently they have also taken to using the lesser known verses of some of these key poems such as the last verse of McCrae's 'In Flanders Field' detailed

above, and another, likewise more dynamic, verse from Binyon's 'To the Fallen' which proudly concludes with 'They fell with their faces to the foe'. This moves away from the more explicit construction of an equivalence between the Loyalist paramilitary and the Great War soldier. For those familiar with the material being used, however, and the local community is saturated in such material, the link is still obvious. For those less informed, the language used makes the same intertextual links and thus constructs a similar meaning.

Poetic resources for Remembrance do, however, offer much more critical and potentially politically disruptive material and some of this is starting to make an appearance. In 2004 a RHC/UVF mural in East Belfast (Rolston, 2010: 37) could use the words 'Dulce et Decorum est Pro Patria mori' without any apparent irony or acknowledgement of the fact that Wilfred Owen's poem of the same name condemned this statement– that it is sweet and fitting to die for one's country – as 'the old lie'. In 2013, by contrast, as described in chapter 7, a wreath at the Shankill Memorial Park from a local military old comrades association featured Siegfried Sassoon's bleak and subversive description of 'Suicide in the Trenches'.

The engagement of the Republic of Ireland in Remembrance has brought forth other verses which act as critical discursive interventions in the myth of an honourable and glorious death. The ones probably best known to Loyalist paramilitaries will be those in the Island of Ireland Peace Park in Belgium where several witnesses to the slaughter of the Western Front have their damning verdicts on the events carved into granite. Most striking of these is Starrett's condemnation of the rich and powerful who sent so many men to their deaths in order to protect their own wealth and power. Another of the stones here carries the despairing words of poet Tom Kettle and these have reappeared cast into the bronze of the new memorial unveiled in Waterford in 2014. Their description of the dead not as 'glorious' or 'noble' but as 'fools' is a challenge to the myth of noble self-sacrifice. For Kettle, by the end, the sacrifice was one made not by the usual 'sacred dead' but 'the foolish dead'.

Remembrance and National Identity

The Republic and those nationalists and Republicans in the North who have engaged with Remembrance therefore engage in a way that, whilst demonstrating their sorrow at the great loss of life, qualifies their commemoration by including elements of direct critique of the myth of death in the war as constructed by the British establishment and Ulster Loyalists over the past century.

Those Republicans visiting the war cemeteries of the Western Front have, indeed, found them hugely moving but along with sorrow their primary emotion has been a recharging of their anger at the British state. They see the war as one more imperial power struggle in which the life of the poor Irishman was exploited for the gain of the rich Englishman. They see the evidence of such slaughter as a clear vindication of the Easter rebels whose actions, whilst unsuccessful initially, led to the determination of the Irish to break with Britain and a consequent opposition to enlistment and certainly conscription in Ireland (Orr, 2008: 300). Some Loyalists like Gusty Spence held a similarly critical view of the British elite and their treatment of the poor Ulsterman. He also used the occasion of Remembrance ceremonies to argue passionately against war. Such voices within Loyalism are not, however, prominent within the discourse of Remembrance. It is still a sacred space upon which critics within Loyalism tread carefully. Any change towards this more critical perspective would require the development of more support for the view expressed in the Hugh Smyth (PUP) memorial mural that working class Catholics and Protestants in Northern Ireland have always been united by their position as third-class citizens. Consensus around that point would transform the potential of the discourse of Remembrance to include acting as a vehicle for united action on socioeconomic change and inequality. Thus Remembrance has the potential to be both a discourse that divides and also unites the people of Northern Ireland.

Engagement of Republicans in Remembrance also presents a challenge to central aspects of Loyalist identity. Immersion in the stories and signifiers of Remembrance has been part of what could be seen as the subculture (Hall and Jefferson, 1976; Willis, 1978; Hebdige, 1979; Thornton, 1995) of Loyalism. Exclusive possession of such knowledge and symbols marked them out as special and as distinct from, especially, the Nationalist/Republican population and the population of the Republic. Losing the distinction of possessing this (sub)cultural capital (Bourdieu, 1984; Thornton, 1995) threatens to strip them of this aspect of their identity. Another threat is posed by the reading given to Irish deaths in the war by Republicans. Where Loyalists see loyalty and an honourable self-sacrifice that won, and demands, a reciprocal debt of loyalty from the Crown, Republicans see callous exploitation. If such a view gains traction it threatens to make claims of a 'debt owed' appear pointless and naïve. It is hardly surprising that some Loyalists are uneasy with such developments.

Remembrance of the First World War has been used by both polities on the island to construct and annually reproduce distinctive national identities. This enabled the development of an independent Ireland and the maintenance of a British Northern Ireland. Subsequently, the actions of the British Army on the island during the Troubles put the final nails in the coffin of any respect for British military dead amongst 'the Nationalist community'. However, the opportunity the attack at Enniskillen offered for a 'rediscovery' of this part of the 'Irish' past was cautiously but determinedly taken up by the Irish government.

The initial paramilitary ceasefires of 1994 enabled the promotion of a range of initiatives that brought the artefacts and memories of the war to the wider population of the Republic and the Nationalist community in the North. They were brought out of the archive, dusted off, and placed in the canon (A. Assman, 2010) of Irish collective memory. Engagement, to varying degrees, with Remembrance on the part of the political leaders of the Republic and the political leaders of militant Republicanism in the North has worked towards the ratification of such a 'canonisation'. The accumulated texts and practices that work collectively and intertextually to construct the discourse of Remembrance are likewise constructing the wider discourse of the collective memories of the 'collectives' on the island. These texts and practices are produced, circulated, maintained and policed by a wide range of institutions. These actors include national governments, local political parties, (ex)paramilitary groups, other community groups, and a range of storytellers these institutions provide platforms for, encourage, advise and commission and those they attempt to censor and suppress. The texts and practices these storytellers produce, perform and disseminate include murals, memorials, memorial gardens, wreaths and their accompanying dedications, Remembrance Crosses and their dedications, poppies, their use of all these in commemorative bricolage, plays, songs, graffiti, political speeches, marches, parades, historical re-enactments, religious ceremonies, films, television and radio programmes, online videos, blogs and accompanying comments, and, increasingly linking and promoting or decrying all of these, social media commentary across a range of platforms. This last example alerts us to the other category of the population involved in the construction of discourses of Remembrance, collective memory and national identity – individuals as they engage or otherwise with these texts and practices.

All of this discursive construction is facilitated and shaped by power and works to shape domains of knowledge through the de- and re-mythologising of the memory of the Great

War. This has the potential to offer up new forms of subjectivity that redraw the potential character and stage directions for the performance of national identity on the island.

Overstating such potential has understandably led to the dismissal of this possibility, and accompanying accusations of naivety from commentators such as Hanley (2013, 2014). Closely observing such discursive action over the course of the last decade, however, has encouraged me to feel confident in arguing that memory work in the field of Remembrance does have such potential. In the last twenty years, and particularly in the last ten, Remembrance has been used to challenge divisions and bring together long-time enemies. It has provided a vehicle for reconciliation and change. It is still a flawed and unstable vehicle, as explained above, but it is enabling progress.

Within the discourse of Remembrance there are two particular strands that provide it with the possibility of it functioning in two divergent ways that can both support and maintain identities as well as offer up a new one. Remembrance with the poppy, and the British Army, and including recent conflicts (i.e. also Ireland) is toxic for Republicans and dangerous for politicians in the Republic. It is likely to remain part of the (sub)cultural capital used by the Unionist community to identify as British. An explicit, or implied, aversion to these symbols of Britishness will also continue to, by their absence, be part of the performance of Irishness. On the other hand, Remembrance wherein the poppy is only one option, the British Army is only present at rituals if representatives of the Irish Defence Force (Irish Army) are also present, and the focus is solely on the First World War offers up the potential for the experience and construction of a shared memory of this part of the island's past. Such a shared collective memory would, because of its unifying function, have the potential to bring into being a new 'collective'. Such a collective would not sweep the other divisive and long-standing categorisations before it. But it would offer up a subject position that cuts across them and can be used to facilitate change. An appreciation of this can be seen in the involvement of Sinn Féin politicians alongside British government ministers and local Unionists and Loyalists at a ceremony at Belfast Cenotaph on Armistice Day that is deliberately kept low-key – without the military bands and other contents that would render such a coming together impossible.

Another way in which this coming together can be facilitated is in the continuing and expanded use of 'chaperones' and 'neutral' spaces. The Island of Ireland Peace Park works so well largely because it is positioned on such neutral territory. From the respective heads of state to (ex)paramilitaries this has enabled first meetings. The introduction of the Irish

tricolour into the Diamond in Derry/Londonderry – site of the war memorial and spiritual heart of Loyalism in the city – has been made possible by its arrival in the company of the flags of other countries who once, as part of the British empire, lost their 'sons' in the war (see chapter 5). Most recently the presence of people from the Polish community in Belfast commemorating the liberation of their nation as well as the deaths of their compatriots has been used as an occasion where the commemorative culture that has developed amongst both Republicanism and Loyalism can be exploited to encourage engagement together with their immigrant hosts. This has also moved such mutual commemorative engagement beyond just the First World War to include the dead of the Second.

Researching Remembrance

Engaging in research over such a long period has brought a depth of knowledge and understanding that has, I hope, produced more useful data and analysis. I would therefore support the use of longitudinal research where practicable. It enabled me to build up an awareness of the complexity of the places I was working in and of the subject I was researching. It allowed time for meanings to coalesce. It also enabled me to have the time to work reflexively. I am not the person I was when I started this research. I have aged a decade. My hair has gone grey. I am no longer able to run and play football. My relationship with life and death has shifted. When starting the research I noticed that most of the people I was talking to were at least in their mid-fifties. I have now joined that group. More significantly, my understanding of death and loss has deepened immeasurably with the death of my mother in the middle of this research. Subsequently I walked the same streets and visited the same sites of memorial but they were no longer the same. They were radically altered.

Without this experience I doubt I would have perceived the use of Remembrance for personal loss unrelated to conflict. I doubt I would have perceived and understood the interest of others in 'bringing to life' their missing ancestors through an engagement with Remembrance and an exploration of the histories of their loved ones. And without the experience of the research running alongside my experience of loss I would not have understood as much about my life and emotions. In this way the research has inevitably included an element of auto-ethnography (Coffey, 1999) which has enriched both the work and my life. At the same time, researching a subject so full of tragedy can bring with it an

emotional burden. This is magnified for any researcher into the deaths of the Troubles by the publication of McKittrick et al's (2007 [earlier version 1999]) *Lost Lives*. I reached for this encyclopaedia of tragedy every time I came upon a name I felt could tell me more. Typically these were names written on Remembrance crosses and placed at one of the memorials I visited. The detail in the book brought them, briefly, to life before describing their death. There may be no permanent public memorial, in the conventional sense, to all the dead of the Troubles but this remarkable book serves that purpose better than any monument. Its existence encourages all who look into these deaths to see them not as an undifferentiated mass but rather as individual tragedies within a larger, complex, social, cultural and political conflict. As a researcher into people's lives, and particularly when we are researching the tragic aspects of those lives, we become aware that we are, in some way, feeding off this misery. We may be doing it with the best of intentions but a sense of unease attaches itself to research on the streets of Belfast where 'Troubles Tourists' are a common sight. For this reason it wasn't just because I felt it might be useful to my research but also because I felt I owed it to the person to consider them *as* a person that I always reached for the book.

The use of photography and audio recordings of thoughts and experiences from the field produced some excellent data and also made possible a variety of reflexive strategies. Listening to the recordings back in my office brought me into contact with myself at that past time in that place. As this process went on I learnt that my future self would often need more detail in order to remember the scene and understand the significance. I could hear the excitement in my voice at some discovery or the confusion at something that didn't 'fit'. I became used to talking and listening to myself. Photography produced an excellent detailed record of phenomena I was interested in. It helped that I was often in places where, these days, photographers are not uncommon. In those parts of my territories that were less usual haunts for tourists the simplicity and small size of the compact digital camera I used enabled me to produce many images quickly and relatively unobtrusively. As Emmel and Clark (2011) observed, the act of producing photographs forces an awareness on the researcher of what decisions are being made about importance and connections and thus brought such thought processes into the open. This enabled reflexive evaluation of such decision-making and also an awareness of the meaning production and analysis that is always present as we observe. At a practical level both forms of data production enabled large quantities of detail to be produced very easily. This could then be explored later. The photography in particular then often produced even

more detail, unseen at the moment of production, which enabled new perspectives, greater understanding and often shaped subsequent exploration.

Another element of the reflexivity experienced during such a period of research is the impact on the research of attempts to disseminate initial findings. I have delivered a dozen conference papers, several research seminar presentations, been involved in various symposia and contributed to discussions at the delivery of others work at all of them. I have also given public talks, engaged in twitter 'conversations' on the subject and in hundreds of face-to-face conversations with individuals and groups. Such experience provides rich material in terms of both feedback that contributes to ideas and also responses that inform my perception of the meaning of Remembrance to a variety of people.

In the course of many of these I have had the opportunity to reflect upon the value of the photographic data in both communicating complex ideas and detail and also in eliciting new and enlightening readings and questions. Most of these have come from me either in the course of preparing for the presentation or in the moment of speaking. Others have come from those I have engaged with. Pink (2013: 12) is right to argue for a prominent and transformative role for photography in ethnographic research and representation.

 Some of the most productive, and enjoyable, elements of the research process have been the interviews and conversations I have had. If I were to continue or replicate the research I would increase the number of such dialogues. I would certainly repeat and expand my use of opportunistic and snowball sampling. Several of the most useful insights and connections were gained from being open to conversation whilst eating in the cafes, browsing in the shops or photographing at the memorials. Access to some of the most important respondents in terms of their contribution to my research would have been extremely difficult without some of these conversations resulting in such access.

The theoretical insights of memory studies have proved very useful in framing the data in a meaningful form. Halbwachs' concept of collective memory has been especially useful. Whilst it is open to critique, as addressed in chapter 2, it is a hugely useful tool for conceptualising the social nature of our narratives of the past. Alieda Assman's analogy of the canon and the archive also proved useful in perceiving and explaining the 'emergence' and rehabilitation of 'memories' of the Great War. Pierre Nora's work on *lieux de mémoire* provided useful examples of how research into commemoration and memorials can be done. It was also regularly useful to remind myself of his encouragement to others to focus

not on 'what actually happened' but on how stories about the past are used in the present. Marianne Hirsch's concept of 'postmemory' was also useful in the context of addressing memories of the Great War at the moment of its centenary. Paul Fussell's insights into the cultural dynamic between literature and popular culture and the experience of the Great War added both a richness to data and also a valuable reminder of the role of the premediative effects of our acculturation on our experience of reality.

The theoretical basis for my work and the reason for my perception of the question was the concept of discourse as used by Michel Foucault. His breaking down of the elements of this, for analytical purposes, into texts, practices and institutions organised my thinking on the topic. The role of institutions in the production, distribution and policing of such texts and practices and how this operated through the application of power within social relations and space enabled me to both produce and understand my data. Roland Barthes' usage of 'myth' was also very useful in helping to conceptualise the narrative outcomes of the discourses under study. It encouraged the identification and analysis of those elements of memory that had become naturalised and thus de-politicised and of the discursive work that had been necessary to achieve this. It therefore also encouraged consideration of what work would need to be done to, initially, de-naturalise and re-politicise such knowledge and then construct a new 'myth'. In dealing with this the work of Jacques Derrida regarding the indeterminacy of meaning and our constant deferral of closure of meaning not only helped me to understand the data I was producing but also my experience of making, and re-making, sense out of it.

Throughout the work I was supported by the ideas on culture, identity and power of not only those writers already listed but also Raymond Williams, Stuart Hall, Homi Bhabha, Paul Willis, Dick Hebdige, Pierre Bourdieu, Sarah Thornton and Amilcar Cabral.

Summary

Exploring the discursive construction of Remembrance in Belfast provides an insight into the phenomenon more generally as well as into the specifics of this context. It demonstrates the ways in which the past is constructed through texts and practices mobilised and policed by key institutions within the society. It shows how what could usefully be described as a 'collective postmemory' is constructed using these memory resources and how such a postmemory operates to create a sense of unity, persistency and

thus legitimacy to the group. This construction makes use of the religious conceptual resources of Christianity to shape the deaths of soldiers in war as a sacred self-sacrifice. This places duties and responsibilities on the shoulders of the survivors and serves to ensure the continuation of the group. At the same time it shuts down the possibility of political critique of the leadership that allowed such deaths to occur. Commemorative practices also provide an opportunity for the restatement and, when necessary, reshaping of both the hierarchy of the group and its overall membership. The martial trappings of Remembrance encourage ongoing support for militarism and also provide the context in which males in a strongly masculine environment can perform acts of personal grieving.

The material of Remembrance, like all cultural signifiers, has no fixed meaning. The meaning of even the most central texts, such as the poppy, can shift across both time and space. The meanings are temporarily 'fixed' through the discursive power of 'local' institutions (Foucault, 1972). This power includes the power to shape and use space with murals, memorials and parades. This works to construct meaning through intertextuality. On the Shankill this includes the construction of the meaning of the Loyalist paramilitary and also of Loyalist more generally. The complexity of this network of meanings reminds us of the difficulty of analysing the meanings of cultural texts and practices at a historical or social distance. Each place and time has its own 'structure of feeling' (Williams, 1961) which influences how any signification is understood. This cautions us to qualify our findings and resist the impulse to universalise. This does not mean that insights gained in one place cannot be valuable elsewhere.

In the case of Ireland the development of the discourse of Remembrance has been part of the construction of discourses of division. The more recent engagement of Nationalists and Republicans with Remembrance has been brought about by a range of institutions with the main aim of building a sense of shared existence upon the island. It has exploited the respect that those most active historically in the conflict in the North, the paramilitaries, have for 'the soldier', and particularly military death, to bring together old enemies and open up common ground upon which commonalities can be discovered and barriers broken down. Doing this has worked best in neutral space such as the Island of Ireland Peace Park in Belgium. The most important elements of the experience there have been the 'unlocking' emotional impact of the cemeteries and the opportunity for informal social interaction. Those, such as Glen Barr, that organise these projects say, self-effacingly, that there was nothing special about the phenomena that brought these people together and

that it could have been a shared enjoyment of football or any other aspect of their shared culture that could have been used as the vehicle (interview with author). Remembrance of the awful waste of life in the Great War, however, has not only a special appeal to those who identify as soldiers but also a special relevance to the context of a 'post-conflict' society starting on the long journey of breaking down the battle-lines. As a powerful site of memory it holds the resources to challenge some influential myths: the myth of glorious death in war; the myth of a benevolent Crown/state to whom loyalty should be given; and the myth of exclusive and oppositional identities on the island and across the islands. In the process it 'brings to light', or transfers from the archive to the canon (A. Assman, 2010), examples of the many individuals who fail to fit neatly into contemporary categories of identity. This encourages an awareness of a 'third space' (Bhabha, 2004) in terms of identity. Such 'anomalies' can lead, as Garber (1992) observes, to cultural anxiety but at the same time they open up the possibility of the reshaping of the discourses that construct identity, including national identity. These discourses include collective memories. How Remembrance will be used to shape these will depend upon the power and policy of the various institutions with influence within the discourse and also on the contingency of events. Remembrance, therefore, is open to a range of potential developments in the coming years. The walls and streets of Belfast, and neutral spaces beyond, will provide key sites for observing their construction. What is certain is that it will have a role to play in any successful ongoing strategies of reconciliation and conflict transformation.

Statement of original contribution of this thesis

This thesis is the first in-depth study of Remembrance in Northern Ireland.

It is the first in-depth study of the role of Remembrance in the construction of national identity in Northern Ireland.

It is the first in-depth study of the full range of visual markers of Remembrance in Northern Ireland.

It is the first study of Remembrance in Northern Ireland that uses collective memory as a central organising concept.

It is the first longitudinal study of the treatment of war memorials on the Falls Road.

It is the first longitudinal study of the use of visual markers of Remembrance on the Shankill Road.

It is the first study of the Island of Ireland Peace Park at Messines.

The thesis explains how Remembrance of the Great War is being used as part of the Peace Process and how this works through: the creation of common ground leading to socialising and connections across divides; the creation of shared memories which open up the potential for new subject positions and the potential for new 'collectives', challenges to existing memories, a re-evaluation of the Somme etc., and an invigorated critique of the British and Unionist establishment.

It explains how the detail of what is included in Remembrance can change it from a vehicle for division to one for peace. A sole focus on the Great War, no military presence and the use of both poppies and laurels enables the involvement of all in Northern Ireland. The involvement of the British Army and the inclusion of commemoration of recent conflicts render it untouchable by Republicans.

It is the first study to expose the way in which the poppy has moved from being used solely to commemorate members of the British Armed Forces to being used not only to commemorate Loyalist paramilitaries but also civilian deaths. Those commemorated were initially those that had died at the hands of Republicans but this was then expanded to include deaths caused by the British Army and eventually expanded beyond this to include deaths from natural causes. The only requirement is for the dead to be identified as Loyalist. The use of the poppy in their commemoration implies this identity.

It also demonstrates the way in which the diforic nature of the First World War murals on the Shankill that have replaced the explicitly paramilitary ones enables a reading that focuses on soldiers of that war for the tourists but, because of the equivalence constructed between these soldiers and contemporary Loyalist, and particularly UVF, paramilitaries, the murals will be seen as also focusing on these groups by locals. Graham (2010) and Brown (2007) argued that such an equivalence was being downplayed in murals at the time. This thesis presents many examples that suggest that this is no longer the case. The focus is indeed ostensibly historical but this only enables a demonstration of the persistence and legitimacy of the UVF.

Graham and Shirlow (2002) argued that the Somme was being used by the UVF as a narrative that avoided sectarianism, establishment Unionism, Orangeism and Britishness.

They argued that it presented an opportunity for critique of the establishment 'donkeys' who led the young 'lions' of the working class Shankill to their doom. Brown (2007) disagrees as he sees no evidence of this. This thesis presents some such evidence.

The thesis shows the way in which intertextual references can be seen in the use of trenches and H Block iconography. It also demonstrates the ways in which intertextuality constructs the meaning of Remembrance as celebrative of Christ-like 'self-sacrifice' that is restorative of the nation.

The thesis demonstrates the usefulness of 'chaperones' in enabling connections to take place across divides – e.g. Poles with Republicans and Loyalists in Milltown Cemetery on the Falls, the King of Belgium with the Irish President and British Queen at Messines – and 'alien' signifiers to be introduced into partisan streets – e.g. the poppy with the lily in imagery on the Falls, the Irish Tricolour with the Australian and Canadian flags as well as the Union Jack at the war memorial in the Diamond in (London)Derry.

The thesis also demonstrates the usefulness of neutral spaces in enabling the coming together of divergent groups and the construction of commonalities away from the partisan geography of Northern Ireland. This is most clearly seen in the construction and use of the Island of Ireland Peace Park.

The thesis also argues that the Park can be understood as not only commemorating 'Irish' involvement in the Great War but also as the first permanent and public Troubles memorial. It also argues that the Park can best be understood as an 'anti-war memorial'.

It adapts Anderson's (1983) term to speak of Remembrance as part of the construction of an 'imagined persisting community' thus emphasising the importance of persistence to conceptualisations of the nation. The Great War provides clear evidence of such persistence. The construction of the equivalence between the Great war soldier and the contemporary Loyalist paramilitary, and the clear historical involvement of this 'community' with the event, enables Great War Remembrance to also be used to demonstrate the persistence and thus legitimacy of the UVF.

The power to construct and display the various texts of Remembrance on the streets of Belfast demonstrates the ongoing power of organisations such as the UVF. The rituals of Remembrance that they engage in also enable them to maintain the unity and hierarchy of the group.

The thesis demonstrates how Remembrance, whilst mobilised as an 'unchanging' ritual and thus part of the evidence of the persistence of the nation, can be, and is being, used as a vehicle for change and the potential reshaping of the nation.

It suggests that Remembrance is also used as a space in which those engaging with its texts and practices can engage in personal mourning unconnected, or only loosely connected, to the ostensible focus of such commemoration. This appears to be particularly the case for males.

The thesis also provides illustrations of the operation of Alieda Assman's (2010) concepts of the 'canon' and 'archive' and how 'memories' can move from one to the other.

In the thesis I question the split between 'communicative' and 'cultural' memory proposed by A. Assman as I argue that the 'distant past' (providing content for Assman's 'cultural memory') is in a dynamic relationship with and always present in 'everyday communication' (which maintains her 'communicative memory').

The thesis proposes the use of the term 'mnemonic acculturation'. All culture is rooted in collective memory and we are inducted into it through our acculturation.

It also argues that collective memory is both a carrier and product of discourse.

It applies the concept of subcultural capital (Thornton 1995, after Bourdieu 1984) to the Loyalists of the Shankill. Their use of the texts and rituals of Remembrance are part of the construction and maintenance of a subculture of Loyalism. It also applies the concept of 'necessary symbolic work' (Willis 1990) to the memory work being done on the Shankill.

It also observes that the Commonwealth War Graves Commission cemeteries that proliferate in France and Belgium are the most literal manifestation of Anderson's 'deep horizontal comradeship' – an element of perception of the nation as an imagined community.

The thesis sets out how Remembrance ceremonies at the Cenotaph in London are mediated in such a way that they construct the nation of the United Kingdom.

Despite Remembrance promoting militarism the thesis argues that the fact that it can bring together military opponents makes it a useful, if problematic resource for enabling conflict transformation.

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